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CHARLOTTE BRONTË. A MONOGRAPH.

VI.

THE "storm and stress" period of Charlotte Brontë's life was not what the world believes it to have been. Like the rest of our race, she had to fight her own battle in the wilderness, not with one devil, but with many; and it was this sharp contest with the temptations which crowd the threshold of an opening life which made her what she was. The world believes that it was under the parsonage roof that the author of *Jane Eyre* gathered up the precious experiences which were afterwards turned to such good account. Mrs. Gaskell, who was carried away by her honest womanly horror of hardened vice, gives us to understand that the tragic turning-point in the history of the sisters was connected with the disgrace and ruin of their brother. We are even asked to believe that but for the folly of a single woman, whom it is probable that Charlotte never saw, "Currer Bell" would never have taken up her pen, and no halo of glory would have settled on the scarred and rugged brows of prosaic Haworth.

It is not so. There may be disappointment among those who have been nurtured on the traditions of the Brontë romance, when they find that the reality is different from what they supposed it to be; some shallow judges may even assume that Charlotte herself loses in moral stature when it is shown that it was not her horror at her brother's fall which drove her to find relief in literary speech. But the truth must be told; and for my part I see nothing in that truth which affects,

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even in an infinitesimal degree, the fame and the honour of the woman of whom I write.

It was Charlotte's visit to Brussels then, first as pupil and afterwards as teacher in the school of Madame Héger, which was the turning-point in her life, which changed its currents, and gave to it a new purpose and a new meaning. Up to the moment of that visit she had been the simple, kindly, truthful Yorkshire girl, endowed with strange faculties, carried away at times by burning impulses, moved often by emotions the nature of which she could not fathom, but always hemmed in by her narrow experiences, her limited knowledge of life and the world. Until she went to Belgium her sorest troubles had been associated with her dislike to the society of strangers, her heaviest burden had been the necessity under which she lay of tasting that "cup of life as it is mixed for governesses" which she detested so heartily. Under the belief that they could qualify themselves to keep a school of their own if they had once mastered the delicacies of the French and German languages, she and Emily set off for this sojourn in Brussels.

One may be forgiven for speculating as to her future lot had she accepted the offer of marriage she received in her early governess days, and settled down as the faithful wife of a sober English gentleman. In that case *Shirley* perhaps might have been written, but *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* never. She learnt much during her two years' sojourn in the

Belgian capital; but the greatest of all the lessons she mastered whilst there was that self-knowledge the taste of which is so bitter to the mouth, though so wholesome to the life. Mrs. Gaskell has made such ample use of the letters she penned during the long months which she spent as an exile from England, that there is comparatively little left to cull from them. Everybody knows the outward circumstances of her story at this time. For a brief period she had the company of Emily; and the two sisters, working together with the unremitting zeal of those who have learned that time is money, were happy and hopeful, enjoying the novel sights of the gay foreign capital, gathering fresh experiences every day, and looking forward to the moment when they would return to familiar Haworth, and realize the dream of their lives by opening a school of their own within the walls of the parsonage. But then Emily left, and Charlotte, after a brief holiday at home, returned alone. Years after, writing to her friend, she speaks of her return in these words:—"I returned to Brussels after Aunt's death against my conscience, prompted by what then seemed an irresistible impulse. I was punished for my selfish folly by a total withdrawal for more than two years of happiness and peace of mind." Why did she thus go back "against her conscience?" Her friends declared that her future husband dwelt somewhere within sound of the chimes of St. Gudule, and that she insisted upon returning to Brussels because she was about to be married there. We know now how different was the reality. The husband who awaited her was even then about to begin his long apprenticeship of love at Haworth. Yet none the less had her spirit, if not her heart, been captured and held captive in the Belgian city. It is not in her letters that we find the truth regarding her life at this time. The truth indeed is there, but not all the truth. "In catalepsy and dread trance," says Lucy Snowe, "I studiously held the quick of my nature. . . . It is on the surface only the common gaze will fall." The secrets of her inner life could not be

trusted to paper, even though the lines were intended for no eyes but those of her friend and confidante. There are some things, as we know well, the heart hides as by instinct, and which even frank and open natures only reveal under compulsion. One of the hardest features of the last year she spent at Brussels was the necessity that she was under of locking all the deepest emotions of her life within her own breast, of preserving the calm and even cold exterior, which should tell nothing to the common gaze, above the troubled, fevered heart that beat within.

"When do you think I shall see you?" she cries to her friend within a few days of her final return to Haworth; "I have of course much to tell you, and I dare say you have much also to tell me—things which we should neither of us wish to commit to paper. . . I do not know whether you feel as I do, but there are times now when it appears to me as if all my ideas and feelings, except a few friendships and affections, are changed from what they used to be. Something in me which used to be enthusiasm is tamed down and broken. I have fewer illusions. What I wish for now is active exertion—a stake in life. Haworth seems such a lonely, quiet spot, buried away from the world. I no longer regard myself as young; indeed I shall soon be twenty-eight, and it seems as if I ought to be working and braving the rough realities of the world as other people do. It is, however, my duty to restrain this feeling at present, and I will endeavour to do so."

Yes; she was "disillusioned" now, and she had brought back from Brussels a heart which could never be quite so light, a spirit which could never again soar so buoyantly, as in those earlier years when the tree of knowledge was still untasted, and the mystery of life still unrevealed. This stay in Belgium was, as I have said, the turning-point in Charlotte Brontë's career, and its true history and meaning is to be found, not in her *Life* and letters, but in *Villette*, the master-work of her mind, and the revelation of the most vivid passages in her own heart's history. "I said I disliked Lucy Snowe," is a remark which Mrs. Gaskell innocently repeats in her memoir of Charlotte Brontë. One need not be surprised at it. Lucy Snowe was never meant to be liked—by everybody; but none the less is Lucy Snowe the truest picture we possess of the real

Charlotte Brontë; whilst not a few of the fortunes which befell this strange heroine are literal transcripts from the life of her creator. One little incident in *Villette*—Lucy's impulsive visit to a Roman Catholic confessor—is taken direct from Charlotte's own experience. During one of the long lonely holidays in the foreign school, when her mind was restless and disturbed, her heart heavy, her nerves jarred and jangled, she fled from the great empty schoolrooms to seek peace in the streets; and she found, not peace perhaps, but sympathy at least, in the counsels of a priest, seated at the Confessional in a church into which she wandered, who took pity on the little heretic, and soothed her troubled spirit without attempting to enmesh it in the folds of Romanism. It was from experiences such as these, with a chastened heart and a nature tamed down, though by no means broken, that she returned to familiar Haworth, to face "the rough realities of the world."

Rough, indeed, those realities were in her case. Her brother, once the hope of the family, had now become its burden and its curse; and from that moment he was to be the prodigal for whom no fatted calf would ever be killed. Her father was fast losing his eyesight; she and her sisters were getting on in life, and "something must be done." Charlotte had returned home, but her heart was still in Brussels, and the wings of her spirit began to beat impatiently against the cage in which she found herself imprisoned. It was only the old story. She had gone out into the world, had tasted strange joys, and drunk deep of waters the very bitterness of which seemed to endear them to her. Returning to Haworth she went back a new woman, with tastes and hopes which it was hard to reconcile with the monotony of life in the parsonage which had once satisfied her completely.

"If I could leave home I should not be at Haworth," she says soon after her return. "I know life is passing away, and I am doing nothing, earning nothing; a very bitter knowledge it is at moments, but I see no way out of the mist." And

then, almost for the first time in her life, something like a cry of despair goes up from her lips: "Probably when I am free to leave home I shall neither be able to find place nor employment. Perhaps, too, I shall be quite past the prime of life, my faculties will be wasted, and my few acquirements in a great measure forgotten. These ideas sting me keenly sometimes; but whenever I consult my conscience it affirms that I am doing right in staying at home; and bitter are its upbraidings when I yield to an eager desire for release."

But this outburst of personal feeling was exceptional, and was uttered in one ear only. Within the walls of her home Charlotte again became the house-mother, busying herself with homely cares, and ever watching for some opportunity of carrying her plan of school-keeping into execution. Nor did she allow either the troubles at home or that weight at her own heart which she bore in secrecy to render her spirit morbid and melancholy. Not a few who have read Mrs. Gaskell's work labour under the belief that this was the effect which Charlotte Brontë's trials had upon her. As a matter of fact, however, she was far too strong, brave, cheerful—one had almost said manly—to give way to any such selfish repinings. She never was one of those sickly souls who go about "glooming over the woes of existence, and how unworthy God's universè is to have so distinguished a resident." Even when her own sorrows were deepest and her lot seemed hardest, she found a lively pleasure in discussing the characters and lots of others, and expended as much pains and time in analysing the inner lives of her friends as our sham Byrons are wont to expend upon the study of their own feelings and emotions. Let the following letter, hitherto unpublished, written at the very time when the household clouds were blackest, speak for her freedom from morbid self-consciousness, as well as for her hearty interest in the well-being of those around her:—

"You are a very good girl indeed to send me such a long and interesting letter. In all that account of the young lady and gentleman in the railway carriage I recognize your faculty

for observation, which is a rarer gift than you imagine. You ought to be thankful for it. I never yet met with an individual devoid of observation whose conversation was interesting, nor with one possessed of that power in whose society I could not manage to pass a pleasant hour. I was amused with your allusions to individuals at —. I have little doubt of the truth of the report you mention about Mr. Z—— paying assiduous attention to —. Whether it will ever come to a match is another thing. *Money* would decide that point, as it does most others of a similar nature. You are perfectly right in saying that Mr. Z—— is more influenced by opinion than he himself suspects. I saw his lordship in a new light last time I was at —. Sometimes I could scarcely believe my ears when I heard the stress he laid on wealth, appearance, family, and all those advantages which are the idols of the world. His conversation on marriage (and he talked much about it) differed in no degree from that of any hackneyed fortune-hunter, except that with his own peculiar and native audacity he avowed views and principles which more timid individuals conceal. Of course I raised no argument against anything he said. I listened and laughed inwardly to think how indignant I should have been eight years since if anyone had accused Z—— of being a worshipper of Mammon and of Interest. Indeed I still believe that the Z—— of ten years ago is not the Z—— of to-day. The world with its hardness and selfishness has utterly changed him. He thinks himself grown wiser than the wisest. In a worldly sense he is wise. His feelings have gone through a process of petrification which will prevent them from ever warring against his interest; — but Ichabod! all glory of principle and much elevation of character are gone! I learnt another thing. Fear the smooth side of Z——'s tongue more than the rough side. He has the art of paying peppery little compliments which he seems to bring out with a sort of difficulty, as if he were not used to that kind of thing, and did it rather against his will than otherwise. These compliments you feel disposed to value on account of their seeming rarity. Fudge! They are at any one's disposal, and are confessedly hollow blarney."

Still more significant, however, is the following letter, showing so kindly and careful an interest in the welfare of the friend to whom it is addressed, even whilst it bears the bitter tidings of a great household sorrow:—

"July 31, 1845.

"I was glad to get your little packet. It was quite a treasure of interest to me. I think the intelligence about G—— is cheering. I have read the lines to Miss —. They are

expressive of the affectionate feelings of his nature, and are poetical, inasmuch as they are true. Faults in expression, rhythm, metre, were of course to be expected. All you say about Mr. — amused me much. Still I cannot put out of my mind one fear, viz., that you should think too much about him. Faulty as he is and as you know him to be, he has still certain qualities which might create an interest in your mind before you were aware. He has the art of impressing ladies by something involuntary in his look and manner; exciting in them the notion that he cares for them, while his words and actions are all careless, inattentive, and quite uncompromising for himself. It is only men who have seen much of life and of the world, and who are become in a measure indifferent to female attractions, that possess this art. So be on your guard. These are not pleasant or flattering words; but they are the words of one who has known you long enough to be indifferent about being temporarily disagreeable, provided she can be permanently useful.

"I got home very well. There was a gentleman in the railroad carriage whom I recognized by his features immediately as a foreigner and a Frenchman. So sure was I of it that I ventured to say to him, '*Monsieur est français, n'est-ce pas?*' He gave a start of surprise, and answered immediately in his own tongue. He appeared still more astonished and even puzzled when after a few minutes' further conversation I inquired if he had not passed the greater part of his life in Germany. He said the surmise was correct. I had guessed it from his speaking French with the German accent.

"It was ten o'clock at night when I got home. I found Branwell ill. He is so very often, owing to his own fault. I was not therefore shocked at first. But when Anne informed me of the immediate cause of his present illness I was very greatly shocked. He had last Thursday received a note from Mr. — sternly dismissing him. . . . We have had sad work with him since. He thought of nothing but stunning or drowning his distressed mind. No one in the house could have rest, and at last we have been obliged to send him from home for a week with some one to look after him. He has written to me this morning and expresses some sense of contrition for his frantic folly. He promises amendment on his return; but so long as he remains at home I scarce dare hope for peace in the house. We must all I fear prepare for a season of distress and disquietude. I cannot now ask Miss — or any one else."

The gloom in the household deepened; but Charlotte was still strong enough and brave enough to meet the world, to retain her accustomed interest in her friends, and to discuss as of yore the characters and

lives of those around her. Curious are the glimpses one gets of her circle of acquaintances at this time. Little did many of those with whom she was brought in contact think of the keen eyes which were gazing out at them from under the prominent forehead of the parson's daughter. Yet not the least interesting feature of her correspondence is the evidence it affords that she was gradually gaining that knowledge of character which was afterwards to be lavished upon her books. A string of extracts from letters hitherto unpublished will suffice to show how the current of her life and thoughts ran in those days of domestic darkness, whilst the dawn of her fame was still hidden in the blackest hour of the night:—

"I have just read M——'s letters. They are very interesting, and show the original and vigorous cast of her mind. There is but one thing I could wish otherwise in them, and that is a certain tendency to flightiness. It is not safe, it is not wise; and will often cause her to be misconstrued. Perhaps *flightiness* is not the right word; but it is a devil-may-care tone which I do not like when it proceeds from under a hat, and still less from under a bonnet."

"I return you Miss ——'s notes with thanks. I always like to read them. They appear to me so true an index of an amiable mind, and one not too conscious of its own worth. Beware of awakening in her this consciousness by undue praise. It is a privilege of simple-hearted, sensible, but not brilliant people that they can *be* and *do* good without comparing their own thoughts and actions too closely with those of other people, and thence drawing strong food for self-appreciation. Talented people almost always know full well the excellence that is in them. . . . You ask me if we are more comfortable. I wish I could say anything favourable; but how can we be more comfortable so long as Branwell stays at home and degenerates instead of improving? It has been lately intimated to him that he would be received again on the same railroad where he was formerly stationed if he would behave more steadily, but he refuses to make an effort. He will not work, and at home he is a drain on every resource, an impediment to all happiness. But there's no use in complaining."

"I thank you again for your last letter, which I found as full or fuller of interest than either of the preceding ones—it is just written as I wish you to write to me—not a detail too much. A correspondence of that sort is the next best thing to actual conversation, though it must be allowed that between

the two there is a wide gulf still. I imagine your face, voice, presence very plainly when I read your letters. Still imagination is not reality, and when I return them to their envelope and put them by in my desk I feel the difference sensibly enough. My curiosity is a little piqued about that countless you mention. What is her name? you have not yet given it. I cannot decide from what you say whether she is really clever or only eccentric. The two sometimes go together, but are often seen apart. I generally feel inclined to fight very shy of eccentricity, and have no small horror of being thought eccentric myself, by which observation I don't mean to insinuate that I class myself under the head clever. God knows a more consummate ass in sundry important points has seldom browsed the green herb of His bounties than I. O Lord, Nell, I'm in danger sometimes of falling into self-weariness. I used to say and to think in former times that X—— would certainly be married. I am not so sanguine on that point now. It will never suit her to accept a husband she cannot love, or at least respect, and it appears there are many chances against her meeting with such a one under favourable circumstances; besides, from all I can hear and see, money seems to be regarded as almost the Alpha and Omega of requisites in a wife. Well, if she is destined to be an old maid I don't think she will be a repining one. I think she will find resources in her own mind and disposition which will help her to get on. As to society, I don't understand much about it, but from the few glimpses I have had of its machinery it seems to me to be a very strange, complicated affair indeed, wherein nature is turned upside down. Your well-bred people appear to me, figuratively speaking, to walk on their heads, to see everything the wrong way up—a lie is with them truth, truth a lie, eternal and tedious botheration is their notion of happiness, sensible pursuits their *ennui*. But this may be only the view ignorance takes of what it cannot understand. I refrain from judging them, therefore, but if I was called upon to *swop*—you know the word I suppose—to swop tastes and ideas and feelings with —— for instance, I should prefer walking into a good Yorkshire kitchen fire and concluding the bargain at once by an act of voluntary combustion."

VII.

The reader has seen that it was not the degradation of Branwell Brontë which formed the turning-point in Charlotte's life. Mrs. Gaskell, anxious to support her own conception of what *should have been* Charlotte's feelings with regard to her brother's ruin, has scarcely done justice either to herself or to her heroine. Thus she makes use of a passage in one of the letters

quoted in the foregoing chapter, but in doing so omits what are perhaps the most characteristic words in it. "He" (Branwell) "has written this morning expressing some sense of contrition; . . . but as long as he remains at home I scarce dare hope for peace in the house." This is the form in which the passage appears in the *Biography*, whereas Charlotte had written of her brother's having expressed "contrition for his frantic folly," and of his having "promised amendment on his return." Mrs. Gaskell could not bring herself to speak of such flagrant sins as those of which young Brontë had been guilty under the name of 'folly,' nor could she conceive that there was any possibility of amendment on the part of one who had fallen so low in vice. Moreover one of her objects was to punish those who had shared the lad's misconduct, and to whom she openly attributed not only his ruin but the premature deaths of his sisters. Thus she felt compelled to take throughout her book a far deeper and more tragic view of this miserable episode in the Brontë story than Charlotte herself took. Having read all her letters written at this period of her life to her two most confidential friends, I am justified in saying that the impression produced on Charlotte by Branwell's degrading fall was not so deep as that which was produced on Mrs. Gaskell, who never saw young Brontë, by the mere recital of the story. Yet Charlotte, though too brave, healthy, and reasonable in all things to be utterly weighed down by the fact that her brother had fallen a victim to loathsome vice, was far from being insensible to the sadness and shamefulness of his condition. What she thought of it she has herself told the world in the story of *The Professor* (p. 198):—

"Limited as had yet been my experience of life, I had once had the opportunity of contemplating near at hand an example of the results produced by a course of interesting and romantic domestic treachery. No golden halo of fiction was about this example; I saw it bare and real, and it was very loathsome. I saw a mind degraded by the practice of mean subterfuge, by the habit of perfidious deception, and a body depraved by the infectious influence of the vice-polluted soul. I had suffered much

from the forced and prolonged view of this spectacle; those sufferings I did not now regret, for their simple recollection acted as a most wholesome antidote to temptation. They had inscribed on my reason the conviction that unlawful pleasure, trenching on another's rights, is delusive and envenomed pleasure—its hollowness disappoints at the time, its poison cruelly tortures afterwards, its effects deprave for ever."

Upon the gentle and sensitive mind of Anne Brontë the effect of Branwell's fall were such as Mrs. Gaskell depicts. She was literally broken down by the grief she suffered in seeing her brother's ruin; but Charlotte and Emily were of stronger fibre than their sister, and their predominant feeling, as expressed in their letters, is one of sheer disgust at their brother's weakness, and of indignation against all who had in any way assisted in his downfall. This may not be consistent with the popular conception of Charlotte's character, but it is strictly true.

We must then dismiss from our minds the notion that the brother's fate exercised that paramount influence over the sisters' lives which seems to be believed. Yet as we have seen, there was a very strong, though hidden influence working in Charlotte during those years in which their home was darkened by Branwell's presence. Her yearning for Brussels, and the life that now seemed like a vanished dream, continued almost as strong as ever. At Haworth everything was dull, commonplace, monotonous. The school-keeping scheme had failed; poverty and obscurity seemed henceforth to be the appointed lot of all the sisters. Even the resource of intercourse with friends was almost entirely cut off; for Charlotte could not bear the shame of exposing the prodigal of the family to the gaze of strangers. It was at this time, and in the mood described in the last letter quoted in the preceding chapter, that she took up her pen and sought to escape from the narrow and sordid cares which environed her by a flight into the region of poetry. She had been accustomed from childhood to write verses, few of which as yet had passed the limits of mediocrity. Now, with all that heart-history through which she had passed at Brussels weighing upon her, she began to

write again, moved by a stronger impulse, stirred by deeper thoughts than any she had known before. In this secret exercise of her faculties she found relief and enjoyment; her letters to her friend showed that her mind was regaining its tone, and the dreary outlook from "the hills of Judæa" at Haworth began to brighten. It was a great day in the lives of all the sisters when Charlotte accidentally discovered that Emily also had dared to "commit her soul to paper." The younger sister was keenly troubled when Charlotte made the discovery, for her poems had been written in absolute secrecy. But mutual confessions hastened her reconciliation. Charlotte produced her own poems, and then Anne also, blushing as was her wont, poured some hidden treasures of the same kind into the eldest sister's lap. So it came to pass that in 1846, unknown to their nearest friends, they presented to the world—at their own cost and risk, poor souls!—that thin volume of poetry "by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell," now almost forgotten, the merits of which few readers have recognized and few critics proclaimed.

Strong, calm, sincere, most of these poems are; not the spasmodic or frothy outpourings of Byron-stricken girls; not even mere echoes, however skilful, of the grand music of the masters. When we dip into the pages of the book we see that these women write because they feel. They write because they have something to say; they write not for the world, but for themselves, each sister wrapping her own secret within her own soul. Strangely enough it is not Charlotte who carries off the palm in these poems. Verse seems to have been too narrow for the limits of her genius; she could not soar as she desired to do within the self-imposed restraints of rhythm, rhyme and metre. Here and there, it is true, we come upon lines which flash upon us with the brilliant fire of genius; but upon the whole we need not wonder that Currer Bell achieved no reputation as a poet. Nor is Anne to be counted among great singers. Sweet indeed her verses are, radiant with the tenderness, resignation, and gentle humility which were the prominent features of her character. One or two of her little

poems are now included in popular collections of hymns used in Yorkshire churches; but as a rule her compositions lack the vigorous life which belongs to those of her sisters. It is Emily who takes the first place in this volume. Some of her poems have a lyrical beauty which haunts the mind ever after it has become acquainted with them; others have a passionate emphasis, a depth of meaning, an intensity and gravity which are startling when we know who the singer is, and which furnish a key to many passages in *Wuthering Heights* which the world shudders at and hastily passes by. Such lines as these ought to make the name of Emily Brontë far more familiar than it is to the students of our modern English literature:—

"Death! that struck when I was most confiding

In my certain faith of joy to be—
Strike again, Time's withered branch
dividing

From the fresh root of Eternity!

"Leaves upon Time's branch were growing
brightly,

Full of sap and full of silver dew;
Birds beneath its shelter gathered nightly;
Daily round its flowers the wild bees flew.

"Sorrow passed, and plucked the golden
blossom;

Guilt stripped off the foliage in its pride;
But within its parent's kindly bosom
Flowed for ever Life's restoring tide.

"Little mourned I for the parted gladness,
For the vacant nest and silent song—
Hope was there, and laughed me out of
sadness;

Whispering, 'Winter will not linger
long!'

"And behold! with tenfold increase blessing,
Spring adorned the beauty-burdened
spray;

Wind and rain and fervent heat, caressing,
Lavished glory on that second May!

"High it rose—no winged grief could sweep
it;

Sin was scared to distance with its slime;
Love, and its own life, had power to keep
it

From all wrong—from every blight but
thine;

"Cruel Death! The young leaves droop and
languish;

Evening's gentle air may still restore—
No! the morning sunshine mocks my
anguish—

Time, for me, must never blossom more!

"Strike it down, that other boughs may flourish
Where that perished sapling used to be;
Thus at least its mouldering corpse will nourish
That from which it sprung—Eternity."

The little book was a failure. This first flight ended only in discomfiture; and Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were once more left to face the realities of life in Haworth parsonage, uncheered by literary success. This was in the summer and autumn of 1846; about which time they were compelled to think of cares which came even nearer home than the failure of their volume of poems. Their father's eyesight was now almost gone, and all their thoughts were centred upon the operation which was to restore it. Yet at the very time when they were thus beset by bitter anxieties they were engaged in another and more important literary venture. The pen once taken up could not be laid down. By poetry they had only lost money; but the idea had occurred to them that by prose-writing money was to be made. At any rate in telling the stories of imaginary people, in opening their hearts freely upon all those subjects on which they had thought deeply in their secluded lives, they would find relief from the solitude of Haworth. Each of the three accordingly began to write a novel. The stories were commenced simultaneously, after a long consultation, in which the outlines of the plots, and even the names of the different characters, were settled. How one must wish that some record of that strange literary council had been preserved! Charlotte, in after life, spoke always tenderly, lovingly, almost reverentially, of the days in which she and her well-beloved sisters were engaged in settling the plan and style of their respective romances. That time seemed sacred to her, and though she learnt to smile at the illusions under which the work was begun, and could see clearly enough the errors and crudities of thought and method which all three displayed, she never allowed any one in her presence to question the genius of Emily and Anne, or to ridicule the prosaic and business-like fashion in which the novel-writing was

undertaken by the three sisters. Returning to the old customs of their childhood, they sat round the table of their sitting-room in the parsonage, each busy with her pen. No trace of their occupation at this time is to be found in their letters, and on the rare occasions on which the father or the brother came into their room, nothing was said as to the work that was going on. The novel-writing, like the writing and publishing of the poems, was still kept profoundly secret. "There is no gentleman of the name in this parish," said Mr. Brontë to the village postman, when the latter ventured to ask who the Mr. Currer Bell could be for whom letters came so frequently from London. But every night the three sisters, as they paced the barely-furnished room, or strained their eyes across the tombstones, to the spot where the weather-stained church tower rose from a bank of nettles, told each other what the work of the day had been, and criticised each other's labours with the freedom of that perfect love which casts out all fear of misconception. Is it needful to tell how the three stories—*The Professor*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Agnes Grey*—are sent forth at last from the little station at Keighley to fare as best they may in that unknown London which is still an ideal city to the sisters, peopled not with ordinary human beings, but with creatures of some strangely-different order? Can any one be ignorant of the weary months which passed whilst *The Professor* was going from hand to hand, and the stories written by Emily and Anne were waiting in a publisher's desk until they could be given to the world on the publisher's own terms? Charlotte had failed, but the brave heart was not to be baffled. No sooner had the last page of *The Professor* been finished than the first page of *Jane Eyre* was begun. The whole of that wondrous story passed through the author's busy brain whilst the life around her was clad in these sombre hues, and disappointment, affliction, and gloomy forebodings were her daily companions. The decisive rejection of her first tale by Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. had been accompanied by some kindly words of advice; so it is to

that firm that she now entrusts the completed manuscript of *Jane Eyre*. The result has already been told. On August 24, 1847, the story is sent from Leeds to London; and before the year is out all England is ringing with the praises of the novel and its author.

Need I defend the sisters from the charge sometimes brought against them that they were unfaithful to their friends in not taking them into their confidence? Surely not. They had pledged themselves to each other that the secret should be sternly guarded, as something sacred, kept even from those of their own household. They were not working for fame; for again and again they give proof that personal fame is the last thing to which they aspire. But they had found their true vocation, the call to work was irresistible, they had obeyed it, and all that they sought now was to leave their work to speak for itself, dis severed absolutely from the humble personality of the authors.

In a letter from Anne Brontë, written in January, 1848, at which time the literary quidnuncs both of England and America were eagerly discussing contradictory theories as to the authorship of *Jane Eyre*, and of the two other stories which had appeared from the pens of Ellis and Acton Bell, I find the following passage:—"I have no news to tell you, for we have been nowhere, seen no one, and done nothing (to *speak of*) since you were here, and yet we contrive to be busy from morning till night." The gentle and scrupulously conscientious girl, whilst hiding the secret from her friend, cannot violate the truth even by a hairsbreadth. The italics are her own. Nothing that can be spoken of has been done. The friend had her own suspicions. Staying in a southern house for the winter, the new novel about which everybody was talking was produced—fresh from town. One of the guests was deputed to read it aloud, and before she had proceeded far Charlotte Brontë's school-fellow had pierced the secret of the authorship. Three months before, Charlotte had been spending a few days at Miss N——'s house, and had openly corrected

the proof-sheets of the story in the presence of her hostess; but she had given the latter no encouragement to speak to her on the subject, and nothing had been said. Now, however, in the surprise of the moment Miss N—— told the company that this must have been written by Miss Brontë, and astute friends at once advised her not to mention the fact that she knew the author of *Jane Eyre* to any one, as her acquaintance with such a person would be regarded as a reflection on her own character! When Charlotte was challenged by her friend, she uttered stormy denials in general terms which carried a complete confirmation of the truth, and when, in the spring of 1848, Miss N—— visited Haworth, full confession was made, and the poems brought forth and shown to her, in addition to the stories.

Very quietly and sedately did "Carrer Bell" take her sudden change of fortune. She corresponded freely with her publishers, and with the critics who had written to her concerning her book; she told her father the secret of her authorship, and exhibited to him the draft which was the substantial recompence of her labours; but in her letters to her friend no difference of tone is to be detected. Success was very sweet to her, as we know, but she bore her honours meekly, betraying nothing of the gratified ambition which must have filled her soul. In truth her thoughts were soon turned from her literary triumph to more pressing matters nearer home. It was after one brief visit to London, accompanied by Anne, to satisfy her publishers that Carrer Bell was a distinct individuality not to be confounded with either Ellis or Acton, that she returned home to find that death was setting its seal upon the household. Branwell, who had been so long the dark shadow in their "humble home," was taken from them without any lengthened preliminary warning. Sharing to the full the eccentricity of the family, he resolved to die as nobody else had ever died before, and when the last agony came on, he rose to his feet, as though proudly defying death itself to do its worst, and expired stand-

ing. In the following letter, hitherto unpublished, to one of her friends—not to her old schoolfellow—Charlotte thus speaks of the last act in the tragedy of her brother's life:—

“HAWORTH, October 14, 1848.

“The event to which you allude came upon us indeed with startling suddenness, and was a severe shock to us all. My poor brother has long had a shaken constitution, and during the summer his appetite had been diminished and he had seemed weaker, but neither we, nor himself, nor any medical man who was consulted on his case thought it one of immediate danger: he was out of doors two days before his death, and was only confined to bed one single day. I thank you for your kind sympathy. Many, under the circumstances, would think our loss rather a relief than otherwise; in truth, we must acknowledge, in all humility and gratitude, that God has greatly tempered judgment with mercy; but yet, as you doubtless know from experience, the last earthly separation cannot take place between near relations without the keenest pangs on the part of the survivors. Every wrong and sin is forgotten then; pity and grief share the heart and the memory between them. Yet we are not without comfort in our affliction. A most propitious change marked the few last days of poor Branwell's life; his demeanour, his language, his sentiments, were all singularly altered and softened, and this change could not be owing to the fear of death, for within half an hour of his decease he seemed unconscious of danger. In God's hands we leave him! He sees not as man sees. Papa, I am thankful to say, has borne the event pretty well. His distress was great at first. To lose an only son is no ordinary trial. But his physical strength has not hitherto failed him, and he has now in a great measure recovered his mental composure; my dear sisters are pretty well also. Unfortunately illness attacked me at the crisis, when strength was most needed; I bore up for a day or two, hoping to be better, but got worse; fever, sickness, total loss of appetite and internal pain, were the symptoms. The doctor pronounced it to be bilious fever—but I think it must have been in a mitigated form; it yielded to medicine and care in a few days; I was only confined to my bed a week, and am, I trust, nearly well now. I felt it a grievous thing to be incapacitated from action and effort at a time when action and effort were most called for. The past month seems an overclouded period in my life.”

Alas! the brave woman who felt it to be “a grievous thing” that she could not bear her full share of the family burden, little knew how terribly that

burden was to be increased, how much heavier and blacker were the clouds which awaited her than any through which she had yet passed. The storm which even then was gathering upon her path was one which no sunshine of fame or prosperity could dissipate. The one to whom Charlotte's heart had always clung most fondly, the sister who had been nearest to her in age and nearest to her in affection, Emily, the brilliant but ill-fated child of genius, began to fade. “She had never,” says Charlotte, speaking in the solitude of her fame, “lingered over any task in her life, and she did not linger now.” Yet the quick decline of Emily Brontë is one of the saddest of all the sad features of the story. I have spoken of her reserve. So intense was it that when dying she refused to admit even to her own sisters that she was ill. They saw her fading before their eyes; they knew that the grave was yawning at her feet; and yet they dared not offer her any attention such as an invalid needed, and such as they were longing to bestow upon her. It was the cruellest torture of Charlotte's life. During the brief period of Emily's illness, her sister writes as follows to her friend:—

“I mentioned your coming to Emily as a mere suggestion, with the faint hope that the prospect might cheer her, as she really esteems you perhaps more than any other person out of this house. I found, however, it would not do; any, the slightest excitement or putting out of the way, is not to be thought of, and indeed I do not think the journey in this unsettled weather, with the walk from Keighley and back, at all advisable for yourself. Yet I should have liked to see you, and so would Anne. Emily continues much the same: yesterday I thought her a little better, but to-day she is not so well. I hope still, for I *must* hope; she is as dear to me as life. If I let the faintness of despair reach my heart I shall become worthless. The attack was, I believe, in the first place, inflammation of the lungs; it ought to have been met promptly in time; but she would take no care, use no means, she is too intractable. I do wish I knew her state and feelings more clearly. The fever is not so high as it was, but the pain in the side, the cough, the emaciation are there still.”

The days went by in the parsonage, slowly, solemnly, each bringing some fresh burden of sorrow to the broken hearts of

Charlotte and Anne. Emily's resolute spirit was unbending to the last. Day after day she refused to own that she was ill, refused to take rest or medicine or stimulants; compelled her trembling hands to labour as of old. And so came the bitter morning in December, the story of which has been told by Mrs. Gaskell with simple pathos, when she "arose and dressed herself as usual, making many a pause, but doing everything for herself," even going on with her sewing as at any time during the years past; until suddenly she laid the unfinished work aside, whispered faintly to her sister, "If you send for a doctor I will see him now," and in two hours passed quietly away.

The broken father, supported on either side by his surviving daughters, followed Emily to her grave in the old church. There was one other mourner—the fierce old dog whom she had loved better almost than any other human being.

"Yes," says Charlotte, writing to her friend, "there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday we put her poor wasted mortal frame quietly under the church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should we be otherwise? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them. She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God's will, and the place where she is gone is better than that she has left."

It was in the very month of December, 1848, when Charlotte passed through this fierce ordeal, and wrote these tender words of love and resignation, that the *Quarterly Review* denounced her as an improper woman who "for some sufficient reason" had forfeited the society of her sex!

Terrible was the storm of death which in three short months swept off two of the little household at Haworth; but it had not even yet exhausted all its fury. Scarcely had Emily been laid in the grave than Anne, the youngest and gentlest of the three sisters, began to fade. Very slowly did she droop. The winter passed away, and the spring came with a glimmer of hope; but the following unpublished letter, written on the 16th of May, shows with what fears Charlotte set forth on

that visit to Scarborough which her sister insisted upon undertaking as a last resource:—

"Next Wednesday is the day fixed for our departure; Ellen accompanies us at her own kind and friendly wish. I would not refuse her society, but dared not urge her to go, for I have little hope that the excursion will be one of pleasure or benefit to those engaged in it. Anne is extremely weak. She herself has a fixed impression that the sea-air will give her a chance of regaining strength. That chance therefore she must have. Having resolved to try the experiment, misgivings are useless, and yet when I look at her misgivings will rise. She is more emaciated than Emily was at the very last, her breath scarcely serves her to mount the stairs, however slowly. She sleeps very little at night, and often passes most of the forenoon in a semi-lethargic state. Still she is up all day, and even goes out a little when it is fine. Fresh air usually acts as a temporary stimulus, but its reviving power diminishes."

Just two weeks after this Anne died at Scarborough, rendering up her soul with that sweetness and resignation of spirit which had adorned her throughout her brief life, and even in the last hour crying, "Take courage, Charlotte, take courage," as she bade farewell to the sister who was left.

Before me lie the few letters which remain of Emily and Anne. There is little in them worth preserving. Both make reference to the fact that Charlotte is the great correspondent of the family, and that their brief and uninteresting epistles can have no charm for one who is constantly receiving letters from her. Yet that modest reserve which distinguished the greatest of the three is plainly visible in what little remains of the correspondence of the others. They had discovered before their death the real power that lay within them; they had just experienced the joy which comes from the exercise of these powers; they had looked forward to a future which should be sunny and prosperous, as no other part of their lives of toil and patient endurance had been. Suddenly death confronted them, and they recognized the fact that they must leave their work undone. Each faced the dread enemy in her own way, but neither shrank even from that blow. Emily's proud spirit refused to be conquered, and, as we have seen, up to the last agony she carried

herself as one sternly indifferent to the weaknesses of the flesh, including that final weakness which must conquer all of us in the end. Anne found consolation, pure and deep, in her religious faith, and she died cheerfully in the firm belief that she was but entering upon that fuller life which lay beyond the grave. The one was defiant, the other resigned; but courage and fortitude were shown by each in accordance with her own special idiosyncrasy.

VIII.

Charlotte went back from Scarborough to Haworth alone. Her father met her with unwonted demonstrations of affection, and she "tried to be glad" that she was once more under the familiar roof. "But this time joy was not to be the sensation." Yet the courage which had held her sisters to the end supported her amid the pangs of loneliness and bereavement. Even now there was no bitterness, no morbid gloom in the heart which had suffered so keenly. Setting aside her own sorrow quietly but resolutely, refusing all the invitations of her friend to seek temporary relief in change of scene, she sat down to complete the story which was intended to tell the world what the lost Emily had seemed to be in the eyes of her fond sister. By herself, in the room in which a short year ago three happy sisters had worked together, within the walls which could never again echo with the old voices, or walking on the moors, which would never more be trodden by the firm, elastic step of Emily, she composed the brilliant story of *Shirley*—the brightest and healthiest of her works. As she writes she sometimes sends forth messages to those who love her, which tell us of the spirit of the hero or the martyr burning within the frail frame of the solitary woman. "Submission, courage, exertion when practicable, these seem to be the weapons with which we must fight life's long battle"; and that these are no mere words she proves with all her accustomed honesty and sincerity, by acting up to them to the very letter. But at times the burden presses upon her till it is almost past endurance. Strangely

enough, it is a comparative trifle, as the world counts it, the illness of a servant, that occasions her fiercest outburst of open grief:—

"You have to fight your way through labour and difficulty at home, it appears, but I am truly glad now you did not come to Haworth. As matters have turned out you would have found only discomfort and gloom. Both Tabby and Martha are at this moment ill in bed. Martha's illness has been most serious. She was seized with internal inflammation ten days ago; Tabby's lame leg has broken out, she cannot stand or walk. I have one of Martha's sisters to help me, and her mother comes up sometimes. There was one day last week when I fairly broke down for ten minutes, and sat down and cried like a fool. Martha's illness was at its height; a cry from Tabby had called me into the kitchen, and I had found her laid on the floor, her head under the kitchen-grate. She had fallen from her chair in attempting to rise. Papa had just been declaring that Martha was in imminent danger; I was myself depressed with headache and sickness that day; I hardly knew what to do or where to turn. Thank God, Martha is now convalescent; Tabby, I trust, will be better soon. Papa is pretty well. I have the satisfaction of knowing that my publishers are delighted with what I sent them—this supports me, but life is a battle. May we *all* be enabled to fight it well."

This letter is dated September 24, 1849, at which time *Shirley* is written, and in the hands of her publishers. She has painted the character of Emily in that of Shirley herself; and her friend Ellen is shadowed forth to the world in the person of Caroline Helston. When the book, with its vivid pictures of Yorkshire life at the beginning of the century, and its masterly sketches of characters as real as those which Shakespeare brings upon the stage, is published, there is but one outcry of praise, even from the critics who were so eager to condemn *Jane Eyre*. Up to this point she had preserved her anonymity, but now she is discovered, and her admirers in London persuade her at last to visit them, and make acquaintance with her peers in the Republic of Letters, the men and women whose names were household words in Haworth Parsonage long before "Currer Bell" had made her first modest appeal to the world.

A passage from one of the following letters, written during this first sojourn in

London, has already been published; but it will well bear reprinting:—

“December, 1849.

“I have just remembered that as you do not know my address you cannot write to me till you get it. I came to this big Babylon last Thursday, and have been, in what seems to me, a sort of whirl ever since; for changes, scenes, and stimulus which would be a trifle to others are much to me. I found when I mentioned to Mr. — my plan of going to Dr. —’s, it would not do at all. He would have been seriously hurt: he made his mother write to me, and thus I was persuaded to make my principal stay at his house. So far I have found no reason to regret this decision. Mrs. — received me at first like one who has had the strictest orders to be scrupulously attentive. I had fire in my bedroom evening and morning, two wax candles, &c., and Mrs. — and her daughters seemed to look on me with a mixture of respect and alarm. But all this is changed; that is to say, the attention and politeness continue as great as ever, but the alarm and estrangement are quite gone; she treats me as if she liked me, and I begin to like her much. Kindness is a potent heart-winner. I had not judged too favourably of — on a first impression—he pleases me much: I like him better as a son and brother than as a man of business. Mr. W— too is really most gentlemanly and well-informed; his weak points he certainly has, but these are not seen in society. Mr. X— (the little man) has again shown his parts. Of him I have not yet come to a clear decision. Abilities he has, for he rules his firm and keeps forty young men under strict control by his iron will. His young superior likes him, which, to speak the truth, is more than I do at present. In fact I suspect he is of the Helston order of men, rigid, despotic, and self-willed. He tries to be very kind, and even to express sympathy sometimes, and he does not manage it. He has a determined, dreadful nose in the middle of his face, which when poked into my countenance cuts into my soul like iron. Still he is horribly intelligent, quick, searching, sagacious, and with a memory of relentless tenacity: to turn to — after him is to turn from granite to easy down or warm fur. I have seen Thackeray.”

“As to being happy, I am under scenes and circumstances of excitement, but I suffer acute pain sometimes—mental pain, I mean. At the moment Mr. Thackeray presented himself I was thoroughly faint from inanition, having eaten nothing since a very slight breakfast, and it was then seven o’clock in the evening. Excitement and exhaustion together made savage work of me that evening. What he thought of me, I cannot tell. This evening I am going to meet Miss Martineau—she has written to me most kindly—she knows me only as Currer Bell—I am going

alone—how I shall get on I do not know. If Mrs. — were not kind, I should sometimes be miserable; but she treats me almost affectionately, her attentions never flag. I have seen many things; I hope some day to tell you what. Yesterday I went over the new Houses of Parliament with Mr. —. An attack of rheumatic fever has kept poor Mr. X— out of the way since I wrote last. I am sorry for his sake. It grows quite dark. I must stop. I shall not stay in London a day longer than I first intended. On those points I form my resolutions, and will not be shaken. The thundering *Times* has attacked me savagely.”

The following letters (with one exception not previously published) belong to the spring of 1850, when Charlotte was at home again, engaged in attending to her father and to the household cares which shared her attention with literary work and anxieties. The first, which refers exclusively to her visit to London, was addressed to one of her old friends in Yorkshire:—

“Ellen it seems told you that I spent a fortnight in London last December. They wished me very much to stay a month, alleging that I should in that time be able to secure a complete circle of acquaintance; but I found a fortnight of such excitement quite enough: the whole day was usually devoted to sight-seeing, and often the evening was spent in society: it was more than I could bear for any length of time. On one occasion I met a party of my critics—seven of them. Some of them had been my bitter foes in print, but they were prodigiously civil face to face. These gentlemen seemed infinitely grander, more pompous, dashing, showy than the few authors I saw. Mr. Thackeray, for example, is a man of very quiet simple demeanour; he is however looked upon with some awe and even distrust. His conversation is very peculiar, too perverse to be pleasant. It was proposed to me to see Charles Dickens, Lady Morgan, Mesdames Trollope, Gore, and some others; but I was aware these introductions would bring a degree of notoriety I was not disposed to encounter; I declined therefore with thanks. Nothing charmed me more during my stay in town than the pictures I saw; one or two private collections of Turner’s best water colours were indeed a treat. His later oil paintings are strange things—things that baffle description. I have twice seen Macready act, once in *Macbeth* and once in *Othello*. I astounded a dinner party by honestly saying I did not like him. It is the fashion to rave about his splendid acting; anything more false and artificial, less genuinely impressive than his whole style, I could scarcely have imagined. The fact is the stage

system altogether is hollow nonsense. They act farces well enough; the actors comprehend their parts and do them justice. They comprehend nothing about tragedy or Shakespeare, and it is a failure. I said so, and by so saying produced a blank silence, a mute consternation. I was indeed obliged to dissent on many occasions, and to offend by dissenting. It seems now very much the custom to admire a certain wordy, intricate, obscure, style of poetry, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes. Some pieces were referred to, about which Currer Bell was expected to be very rapturous, and failing in this, he disappointed. London people strike a provincial as being very much taken up with little matters, about which no one out of particular town circles cares much. They talk, too, of persons, literary men and women, whose names are scarcely heard in the country, and in whom you cannot get up an interest. I think I should scarcely like to live in London, and were I obliged to live there I should certainly go little into company—especially I should eschew the literary critics."

"I have, since you went, had a remarkable epistle from Thackeray, long, interesting, characteristic; but it unfortunately concludes with the strict injunction, *Show this letter to no one*. Adding that if he thought his letters were seen by others, he should either cease to write, or write only what was conventional. But for this circumstance I should have sent it with the others. I answered it at length. Whether my reply will give satisfaction or displeasure remains yet to be ascertained. Thackeray's feelings are not such as can be gauged by ordinary calculation: variable weather is what I should ever expect from that quarter. Yet in correspondence, as in verbal intercourse, this would torment me."

"I believe I should have written to you before, but I don't know what heaviness of spirit has beset me of late, made my faculties dull, made rest weariness, and occupation burdensome. Now and then the silence of the house, the solitude of the room has pressed on me with a weight I found it difficult to bear, and recollection has not failed to be as alert, poignant, obtrusive, as other feelings were languid. I attribute this state of things partly to the weather. Quicksilver invariably falls low in storms and high winds, and I have ere this been warned of approaching disturbance in the atmosphere by a sense of bodily weakness, and deep, heavy mental sadness, which some would call *presentiment*. Presentiment indeed it is, but not at all supernatural. The Haworth people have been making great fools of themselves about *Shirley*, they take it in the enthusiastic light. When they got the volumes at the Mechanics' Institution, all the members wanted them; they cast lots for the whole three, and whoever got a volume was only allowed to keep it two days and to be fined a shilling *per diem* for longer detention. It would be mere nonsense and vanity to tell you

what they say. I have had no letters from London for a long time, and am very much ashamed of myself to find, now when that stimulus is withdrawn, how dependent upon it I had become. I cannot help feeling something of the excitement of expectation till post-hour comes, and when day after day it brings nothing, I get low. This is a stupid, disgraceful, unmeaning state of things. I feel bitterly enraged at my own dependence and folly. It is so bad for the mind to be quite alone, to have none with whom to talk over little crosses and disappointments, and laugh them away. If I could write I daresay I should be better, but I cannot write a line. However (D.V.) I shall contend against the idiocy. I had rather a foolish letter from Miss — the other day. Some things in it nettled me, especially an unnecessarily earnest assurance that in spite of all I had gone and done in the writing line I still retained a place in her esteem. My answer took strong and high ground at once. I said I had been troubled by no doubts on the subject, that I neither did myself nor her the injustice to suppose there was anything in what I had written to incur the just forfeiture of esteem. I was aware, I intimated, that some persons thought proper to take exceptions at *Jane Eyre*, and that for their own sakes I was sorry, as I invariably found them individuals in whom the animal largely predominated over the intellectual, persons by nature coarse, by inclination sensual, whatever they might be by education and principle."

"I inclose a slip of newspaper for your amusement. Me it both amused and touched, for it alludes to some who are in this world no longer. It is an extract from an American paper, and is written by an emigrant from Haworth. You will find it a curious mixture of truth and inaccuracy. Return it when you write again. I also send you for perusal an opinion of *Jane Eyre*, written by a *working-man* in this village; rather, I should say, a record of the feelings the book excited in the poor fellow's mind; it was not written for my inspection, nor does the writer now know that his little document has by intricate ways come into my possession, and I have forced those who gave it to promise that they will never inform him of this circumstance. He is a modest, thoughtful, feeling, reading being, to whom I have spoken perhaps about three times in the course of my life; his delicate health renders him incapable of hard or close labour; he and his family are often under the pressure of want. He feared that if Miss Brontë saw what he had written, she would laugh it to scorn. But Miss Brontë considers it one of the highest, because one of the most truthful and artless tributes her work has yet received. You must return this likewise. I do you great honour in showing it to you."

Once more we can see that the healthy,

happy interest she takes in the welfare of others is beginning to assert itself. For a time, under the keen smart of the wounds death had inflicted on her, she had found little heart to discuss the affairs of her circle of friends in her correspondence; but now the outer world vindicates its claim to her renewed attention, and she again begins to discuss and analyse the characters of her acquaintances with a skill and minuteness which make them as interesting even to strangers as any of the most closely-studied characters of fiction can be.

"I return Q——'s letter. The business is a most unpleasant one to be concerned in. It seems to me *now* altogether unworthy in its beginning, progress, and ending. Q—— is the only pure thing about it; she stands between her coarse father and cold, unloving suitor, like innocence between a pair of world-hardened knaves. The comparison seems rather hard to be applied to V——, but as I see him now he merits it. If V—— has no means of keeping a wife, if he does not possess a sixpence he is sure of, how can he think of marrying a woman from whom he cannot expect she should work to keep herself? V——'s want of candour, the twice-falsified account he gave of the matter, tells painfully and deeply against him. It shows a glimpse of his hidden motives such as I refrain from describing in words. After all he is perhaps only like the majority of men. Certainly those men who lead a gay life in their youth, and arrive at middle life with feelings blunted and passions exhausted, can have but one aim in marriage—the selfish advancement of their interest. And to think that such men take as wives—as second selves—women young, modest, sincere, pure in heart and life, with feelings all fresh and emotions all unworn, and bind such virtue and vitality to their own withered existence, such sincerity to their own hollowness, such disinterestedness to their own haggard avarice! to think this, troubles the soul to its inmost depths. Nature and justice forbid the banms of such wedlock. This note is written under excitement. Q——'s letter seems to have lifted so fraudulent a veil, and to show both father and suitor lurking behind in shadow so dark, acting from motives so poor and low, so conscious of each other's littleness, and consequently so destitute of mutual respect! These things incense me, but I shall cool down."

"I cannot find your last letter to refer to, and therefore this will be no answer to it. You must write again, by return of post if possible, and let me know how you are progressing. What you said in your last confirmed my opinion that your late attack had been coming on for a long time. Your wish for a

cold water bath, &c., is, I should think, the result of fever. Almost every one has complained lately of some tendency to slow fever. I have felt it in frequent thirst and in frequent appetite. Papa too, and even Martha, have complained. I fear this damp weather will scarcely suit you; but write and say all. Of late I have had many letters to answer; and some very bothering ones from people who want opinions about their books, who seek acquaintance, and who flatter to get it; people who utterly mistake all about me. They are most difficult to answer, put off, and appease, without offending; for such characters are excessively touchy, and when affronted turn malignant. Their books are too often deplorable."

In June, 1850, she is induced to pay another visit to London, going upon this occasion whilst the season is at its height, though she has stipulated before going that she is "not to be lionized."

"I came to London last Thursday. I am staying at ——. Here I feel very comfortable. Mrs. — treats me with a serene, equable kindness which just suits me. Her son is as before—genial and friendly. I have seen very few persons, and am not likely to see many, as the agreement was that I was to be very quiet. We have been to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, to the opera, and the Zoological Gardens. The weather is splendid. I shall not stay longer than a fortnight in London; the feverishness and exhaustion beset me somewhat, but I think not quite so badly as before—as indeed I have not yet been so much tired."

"I am leaving London if all be well on Tuesday, and shall be very glad to come to you for a few days if that arrangement still remains convenient to you. My London visit, has much surpassed my expectations this time. I have suffered less, and enjoyed more than before; rather a trying termination yet remains to me. Mrs. —'s youngest son is at school in Scotland, and her eldest is going to fetch him home for the vacation. The other evening he announced his intention of taking one of his sisters with him, and the evening after he further proposed that Miss Brontë should go down to Edinburgh and join them there, and see that city and its suburbs. I concluded he was joking, laughed and declined. However, it seems he was in earnest, and being always accustomed to have his will, he brooks opposition ill. The thing appearing to me perfectly out of the question, I still refused. Mrs. — did not at all favour it, but her worthy son only waxed more determined. This morning she came and entreated me to go; G—— wished it so much, he had begged her to use her influence, &c., &c. Now, I believe that he and I understand each other very well, and respect each other very sincerely. We both know the wide breach time

has made between us. We do not embarrass each other, or very rarely. My six or eight years of seniority, to say nothing of lack of all pretensions to beauty, &c., are a perfect safeguard. I should not in the least fear to go with him to China. I like to see him pleased. I greatly dislike to ruffle and disappoint him; so he shall have his mind, and if all be well I mean to join him in Edinburgh, after I have spent a few days with you. With his buoyant animal spirits and youthful vigour he will make severe demands on my muscles and nerves; but I daresay I shall get through somehow."

IX.

Charlotte Brontë's letters during 1850 and 1851 are among the most valuable illustrations of the true character of the woman which we possess. Stricken as she had been by the successive bereavements which had robbed her of her dearest friends and companions, and left her the sole prop of the dull house on the moors and of its aged head, she had yet recovered much of her peace of mind and even of her vitality and cheerfulness. She had now, also, begun to see something of life as it is presented, not to despised governesses, but to successful authoresses. Her visits to London had brought her into contact with some of the leaders of the literary world—who can have forgotten her interview with Thackeray, when she was "moved to speak to the giant of some of his shortcomings"? Haworth itself had become a point of attraction to curious persons, and not a few visitors found their way under one pretence or another to the old parsonage, to be received with effusive courtesy by Mr. Brontë, and with shy indifference by his daughter. Her correspondence, too, became widely-spread among men and women of distinction in the world and in Society. Altogether it was a different life upon which she now looked out from her remote eyrie among the hills—a life with many new interests in it, with much that was calculated to awaken chords in her heart hitherto untouched, and to bring to light new characteristics of her temper and genius. One would fain speculate upon what might have been, but for the desolation wrought in her home and heart by that tempest of death which raged during the autumn of

1848 and the spring of 1849. As it was no novelty could make her forget what had been; no new faces, however welcome, could dim the tender visions of the faces that were seen no more, or could weaken in any degree the affection with which she still clung to the friend of her school-days. Simplicity and sincerity are the prevailing features of her letters, during this critical time in her life, as during all the years which had preceded it. They reflect her mind in many moods; they show her in many different situations; but they never fail to give the impression of one whose allegiance to her own conscience and whose reverence for truth and purity remain now what they had been in her days of happy and unworldly obscurity. The letters I now quote are quite new to the public.

"July 18th, 1850.

"You must cheer up, for your letter proves to me that you are low-spirited. As for me, what I said is to be taken in this sense:—that, under the circumstances, it would be presumptuous in me to calculate on a long life—a truth obvious enough. For the rest, we are all in the hands of Him who apportions His gifts, health or sickness, length or brevity of days, as is best for the receiver: to him who has work to do time will be given in which to do it; for him to whom no task is assigned the season of rest will come earlier. As to the suffering preceding our last sleep, the sickness, decay, the struggle of flesh and spirit, it *must* come sooner or later to all. If, in one point of view, it is sad to have few ties in the world, in another point of view it is soothing; women who have husbands and children must look forward to death with more pain, more fear, than those who have none. To dismiss the subject, I wish (without cant, and not in any hackneyed sense) that both you and I could always say in this matter, the will of God be done. I am beginning to get settled at home, but the solitude seems heavy as yet. It is a great change, but in looking forward I try to hope for the best. So little faith have I in the power of any temporary excitement to do real good that I put off day by day writing to London to tell them I have come home; and till then it was agreed I should not hear from them. It is painful to be dependent on the small stimulus letters give. I sometimes think I will renounce it altogether, close all correspondence on some quiet pretext, and cease to look forward at post-time for any letters but yours."

"Sept. 14th, 1850.

"I wish, dear Ellen, you would tell me what is the 'twaddle' about my marrying,

which you hear. If I knew the details I should have a better chance of guessing the quarter from which such gossip comes. As it is I am quite at a loss. Whom am I to marry? I think I have scarcely seen a single man with whom such a union would be possible since I left London. Doubtless there are men whom, if I chose to encourage, I might marry. But no matrimonial lot is even remotely offered me which seems to me truly desirable. And even if that were the case there would be many obstacles. The least allusion to such a thing is most offensive to papa. An article entitled 'Currer Bell' has lately appeared in the *Palladium*, a new periodical published in Edinburgh. It is an eloquent production, and one of such warm sympathy and high appreciation as I had never expected to see. It makes mistakes about authorship, &c., but those I hope one day to set right. Mr. X— (the little man) first informed me of this article. I was somewhat surprised to receive his letter, having concluded nine months ago that there would be no more correspondence from that quarter. I inclose a note from him received subsequently, in answer to my acknowledgment. Read it, and tell me exactly how it impresses you regarding the writer's character, &c. He is deficient neither in spirit nor sense."

"Jan. 20th, 1851.

"Thank you heartily for the two letters I owe you. You seem very gay at present, and provided you only take care not to catch cold with coming home at night, I am not sorry to hear it; a little movement, cheerfulness, stimulus is not only beneficial, but necessary. Your last letter but one made me smile. I think you draw great conclusions from small inferences. I think those 'fixed intentions' you fancy are imaginary. I think the 'undercurrent' amounts simply to this, a kind of natural liking and sense of something congenial. Were there no vast barrier of age, fortune, &c., there is perhaps enough personal regard to make things possible which now are impossible. If men and women married because they like each other's temper, look, conversation, nature, and so on—and if, besides, years were more nearly equal—the chance you allude to might be admitted as a chance; but other reasons regulate matrimony—reasons of convenience, of connection, of money. Meantime I am content to know him as a friend, and pray God to continue to me the common sense to look on one so young, so rising, and so hopeful in no other light. The hint about the Rhine disturbs me; I am not made of stone, and what is mere excitement to others is fever to me. However it is a matter for the future, and long to look forward to. As I see it now, the journey is out of the question—for many reasons—I rather wonder he should think of it. Good-bye. Heaven grant us both some quiet wisdom, and strength not merely

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to bear the trial of pain, but to resist the lure of pleasure when it comes in such a shape as our better judgment disapproves."

"Feb 26th, 1851.

"You ought always to conclude that when I don't write it is simply because I have nothing particular to say. Be sure that ill news will travel fast enough, and good news too when such commodity comes. If I could often be or seem in brisk spirits, I might write oftener, knowing that my letters would amuse. But as times go, a glimpse of sunshine now and then is as much as one has a right to expect. However, I get on very decently. I am now and then tempted to break through my resolution of not having you to come before summer, and to ask you to come to this Patmos in a week or two. But it would be dull—very dull—for you. . . . What would you say to coming here the week after next to stay only just so long as you could comfortably bear the monotony? If the weather were dry, and the moors fine, I should not mind it so much—we could walk for change."

About this time it is clear that Miss Brontë was suffering from one of her periodical attacks of nervous exhaustion. She makes repeated references in her letters to her ailments, attributing them generally to her liver, and she also mentions frequently an occurrence which had given her not a little anxiety and concern. This was an offer of marriage from a business man in a good position, whom she had already met in London. The following letters, which are inserted here without regard to the precise date, and of which Mrs. Gaskell has merely used half-a-dozen lines, relate to this subject:—

"You are to say no more about 'Jupiter' and 'Venus.' What do you mean by such heathen trash? The fact is no fallacy can be wilder, and I won't have it hinted at, even in jest, because my common-sense laughs it to scorn. The idea of X— shocks me less; it would be a more likely match, if 'matches' were at all in question, *which they are not*. He still sends his little newspaper, and the other day there came a letter of a bulk, volume, pith, judgment, and knowledge, worthy to have been the product of a giant."

"X— has been, and is gone; things are just as they were. I only know, in addition to the slight information I possessed before, that this Australian undertaking is necessary to the continued prosperity of his firm, that he alone was pronounced to possess the power and means to carry it out successfully, that mercantile honour, combined with his own sense of duty, obliged him to accept the post

K K

of honour and of danger to which he has been appointed, that he goes with great personal reluctance, and that he contemplates an absence of five years. He looked much thinner and older. I saw him very near, and once through my glass. The resemblance to Branwell struck me forcibly; it is marked. He is not ugly, but very peculiar. The lines in his face show an inflexibility, and, I must add, a hardness of character, which does not attract. As he stood near me, as he looked at me in his keen way, it was all I could do to stand my ground tranquilly and steadily, and not to recoil as before. It is no use saying anything if I am not candid. I avow then that on this occasion, predisposed as I was to regard him very favourably, his manners and his personal appearance scarcely pleased me more than at the first interview. He gave me a book at parting, requesting in his brief way that I would keep it for his sake, and adding hastily, 'I shall hope to hear from you in Australia; your letters *have* been and *will* be a greater refreshment than you can think or I can tell.' And so he is gone, and stern and abrupt little man as he is, too often jarring as are his manners, his absence and the exclusion of his idea from my mind, leave me certainly with less support and in deeper solitude than before. You see, dear Nell, we are still precisely on the same level. You are not isolated. I feel that there is a certain mystery about this transaction yet, and whether it will ever be cleared up to me, I do not know. However, my plain duty is to wean my mind from the subject, and if possible to avoid pondering over it. . . . I feel that in his way he has a regard for me; a regard which I cannot bring myself entirely to reciprocate in kind, and yet its withdrawal leaves a painful blank. I have just got your note. Above, you have all the account of my visitor. I dare not aver that your kind wish that the visit would yield me more pleasure than pain has been fulfilled. Something at my heart aches and gnaws drearily. But I must cultivate fortitude."

"Thank you for your kind note. It was kind of you to write it, though it *was* your school-day. I never knew you to let a slight impediment stand in your way when doing a friendly action. Certainly I shall not soon forget last Friday, and never, I think, the evening and night succeeding that morning and afternoon. Evils seldom come singly, and soon after X— was gone papa grew much worse. He went to bed early. Was sick and ill for an hour, and when at last he began to dose and I left him, I came down to the dining-room with a sense of weight, fear, and desolation hard to express and harder to endure. A wish that you were with me did cross my mind; but I repelled it as a most selfish wish. Indeed it was only shortlived; my natural tendency in moments of this sort is to get through the struggle alone; to think that one is burdening others

makes all worse. You speak to me in soft, consolatory accents; but I hold far sterner language to myself, dear Nell. An absence of five years; a dividing expanse of three oceans; the wide difference between a man's active career and a woman's passive existence. These things are almost equivalent to a lifelong separation. But there is another thing which forms a barrier more difficult to pass than any of these. Would X— and I ever suit? Could I ever feel for him enough love to accept of him as a husband? Friendship, gratitude, esteem, I have; but each moment that he came near me, and that I could see his eyes fastened upon me, my veins ran ice. Now that he is away I feel far more gently towards him; it is only close by that I grow rigid, stiffening with a strange mixture of apprehension and anger, which nothing softens but his retreat and a perfect subsiding of his manner. I did not want to be proud nor intend to be proud, but I was forced to be so. Most true is it that we are over-ruled by One above us, that in His hands our very will is as clay in the hands of the potter."

"I trust papa is not worse; but he varies. He has never been down to breakfast but once since you left. The circumstance of having him to think about just now is good for me in one way; it keeps my thoughts off other matters which have been complete bitterness and ashes; for I do assure you a more entire crumbling away of a seeming foundation of support and prospect of hope than that which I allude to can scarcely be realized."

"I have heard from X— to-day, a quiet little note. He returned to London a week since on Saturday. He leaves England next month. His note concludes with asking whether he has any chance of seeing me in London before that time. I must tell him that I have already fixed June for my visit, and, therefore, in all human probability we shall see each other no more. There is still a want of plain mutual understanding in this business, and there is sadness and pain in more ways than one. My conscience, I can truly say, does not *now* accuse me of having treated X— with injustice or unkindness. What I once did wrong in this way I have endeavoured to remedy both to himself and in speaking of him to others. I am sure he has estimable and sterling qualities; but with every disposition—with every wish—with every intention even to look on him in the most favourable point of view at his last visit, it was impossible for me in my inmost heart to think of him as one that might one day be acceptable as a husband. . . . No if X— be the only husband fate offers to me, single I must always remain. But yet at times I grieve for him; and perhaps it is superfluous, for I cannot think he will suffer much—a hard nature, occupation, change of scene will befriend him."

"I have had a long, kind letter from Miss Martineau lately. She says she is well and

happy. Also I have had a very long letter from Mr. —, the first for many weeks. He speaks of X— with much respect and regret, and says he will be greatly missed by many friends. I discover with some surprise that papa has taken a decided liking to X—. The marked kindness of his manner to him when he bade him good-bye, exhorting him to be 'true to himself, his country, and his God,' and wishing him all good wishes, struck me with some astonishment at the time; and whenever he has alluded to him since, it has been with significant eulogy. . . . You say papa has penetration. On this subject I believe he has indeed. I have told him nothing, yet he seems to be *au fait* to the whole business. I could think at some moments his guesses go further than mine. I believe he thinks a prospective union, deferred for five years, with such a decorous, reliable personage, would be a very proper and advisable affair. However I ask no questions, and he asks me none; and if he did I should have nothing to tell him."

The summer following this affair of the heart witnessed another visit to London, where she heard Mr. Thackeray's lectures on the humourists. How she enjoyed listening to her idol, in one of his best moods, need not be told. Some there are still living who remember that first lecture, when all London had assembled to listen to the author of *Vanity Fair*, and the rumour suddenly ran round the room that the author of *Jane Eyre* was among the audience. Men and women were at fault at first, in their efforts to distinguish "Currer Bell" in that brilliant company of literary and social notabilities; but at last she was discovered hiding under the motherly wing of a chaperon, timid, blushing, but excited and pleased—not at the attention she herself attracted, but at the treat she had in prospect. One or two gentlemen sought and obtained introductions to her—amongst them Lord Carlisle and Mr. Monckton Milnes. They were not particularly impressed by the appearance or the speech of the parson's daughter. Her person was insignificant, her dress somewhat rustic, her language quaintly precise and formal, her manner odd and constrained. Altogether this was a woman whom even

London could not lionize; somebody outwardly altogether too plain, simple, unpretending, to admit of hero-worship. Within there was, as we know, something entirely exceptional and extraordinary; but, like Lucy Snowe, she still kept her real self hidden under a veil which no casual friend or chance acquaintance was allowed to lift. It was but a brief visit to the "Big Babylon," and then back to Haworth, to loneliness and duty! In July, 1851, she writes from the parsonage to one of her friends as follows:—

"My first feeling on receiving your note was one of disappointment, but a little consideration sufficed to show me that 'all was for the best.' In truth it was a great piece of extravagance on my part to ask you and Ellen together; it is much better to divide such good things. To have your visit in prospect will console me when hers is in retrospect. Not that I mean to yield to the weakness of clinging dependently to the society of friends, however dear; but still as an occasional treat I must value and even seek such society as a necessary of life. Let me know then whenever it suits your convenience to come to Haworth, and, unless some change I cannot now foresee occurs, a ready and warm welcome will await you. Should there be any cause rendering it desirable to defer the visit, I will tell you frankly. The pleasures of society I cannot offer you; nor those of fine scenery. But I place very much at your command—the moors, some books, a series of quiet 'curling-hair-times,' and an old pupil into the bargain. Ellen may have told you that I spent a month in London this summer. When you come you shall ask what questions you like on that point, and I will answer to the best of my stammering ability. Do not press me much on the subject of the 'Crystal Palace.' I went there five times, and certainly saw some interesting things, and the *coup d'œil* is striking and bewildering enough. But I never was able to get up any raptures on the subject, and each renewed visit was made under coercion rather than my own free will. It is an excessively bustling place; and after all its wonders appeal too exclusively to the eye, and rarely touch the heart or head. I make an exception to the last assertion in favour of those who possess a large range of scientific knowledge. Once I went with Sir David Brewster, and perceived that he looked on objects with other eyes than mine."

T. WEMYSS REID.

To be continued.

MADCAP VIOLET.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TIDINGS.

He did not at all betray the fear that might have been expected in the case of a man who, believing that a certain woman has been dead for some months, suddenly finds her standing before him in the streets. The terror too plainly was all on her side. Even by the light of the gas-lamps, and even through that thick veil, he saw the frightened stare of her eyes; and when she spoke it was with a hurried and harsh voice not like that of the Violet of old.

"Is this an accident?" she demanded, abruptly.

"No—" he stammered. "It was an accident certainly that I heard from young Dowse about you—that is to say—"

"Does he know who I am?" she again demanded, with the same abruptness: her hands were clenched, and her face deadly pale.

"No, he does not."

"Nor any one?"

"No one but myself. I waited to make sure. Violet, why have you done all this?"

She paid no heed to him. For a second or two she remained silent; then she said, vehemently—

"No one knows but yourself. You must give me your word of honour—you must swear to me—that not another human being shall ever know!"

He almost retreated a step, bewildered.

"Violet," said he, in a protesting way, "I don't understand you. You—you don't know how sorry we have all been—and—and you expect me not to go with such good news—to your father, and others—it would be madness—you have no right to inflict such pain upon them, merely because of a mad freak—I don't understand it——"

"No, and you never would understand it," she said, bitterly, "if I explained it to you a hundred times over. It is a mad freak! You think I was pleasing myself, and grieving others unnecessarily? Well, that is no matter. What any one thinks of me is no matter now——"

She uttered these last words in an absent way. Even he was struck by the tone of tragic despair in them; he could not understand this strange thing.

"Come, Violet," said he, "you have made a great mistake; but nobody will think anything about it—we shall all be so glad to get you back again. You and I were not great friends when we last saw each other; but now—well, you must let me share in the happiness you will cause to every one. No one will ask you any questions you don't wish to answer. You will have everything your own way. You won't be asked to do anything you don't like."

He was talking almost at random; for he was very much excited; and behind all this garrulous speech his brain was busy working with all sorts of other speculations. Was it possible she had run away because she had found herself miserable up in the north? Was it the prospect of her marriage with James Drummond that was the cause of her misery? And now—seeing how definitely she had testified to her repugnance—was it not possible that she might be induced to revert to her earlier friend, who now stood beside her, and who had mourned her loss with much sincerity of feeling?

"You don't know—you don't know," she said, sadly, in answer to all these solicitations of his. "You talk to me as if I were a spoiled child, who had run away from home. My own way?—was there anything in which I did not have my own way, while I lived with those good friends? It was not that at

all. I was the cause of great unhappiness; and—and I loved them; and—and I knew it was better for them and every one to think that I was dead——”

“I am sure you are mistaken,” said he, earnestly, yet he saw how little effect his words had. They seemed to go by the settled sorrow of that pale face. “The greatest unhappiness they could have known was your death.”

“That will all pass away,” she said. “I considered that. They will be grieved for a time—for I think they liked me, in spite of—in spite of everything; but afterwards, it will be all right. Now,” she added, with renewed decision, “you must give me that promise.”

Bewildered as he was, he had still sufficient strength left him to resist that demand; and he did so boldly. But she was fully as firm. At length he asked to be allowed some time to consider. Would she give him till the following evening, when he could meet her again?

“No,” said she, “you must promise now, absolutely. And we must not meet again.”

“You have no right to make such a demand,” said he warmly. “Do you mean to say that I ought to let your father remain in ignorance that you are alive?”

“You had no right to discover my secret,” she said, quite as warmly.

“Wait a minute—let me think,” he said, resolved not to stumble into some irretrievable blunder.

They were now walking up and down Great Marlborough Street—slowly pacing the almost deserted pavement. It was only when they passed a gas-lamp that he could catch a glimpse through the veil of that pale face and the dark eyes he used to know. Well, as they walked so, in silence, Miller struggled hard to keep all his wits about him in this serious crisis. He knew the decision of which this girl was capable; if he did not at least pretend to accede there was no saying what further rashness on her part might not result. His first point was

to gain time. Supposing he did promise, he might talk her over afterwards. Moreover, by yielding so far, he might induce her to reconsider that resolve of hers that they should not meet again. He was an acute young man after all; and he saw what an advantageous position it would be for him to become her only friend. He would make a show of furthering even her wildest projects, for the present.

He had never been madly in love with this girl; but, so far as his nature allowed him, he had cherished a high regard for her; he had warmly admired her good looks and fine figure; he had even been fascinated in a way by her high courage and frankness; and his imagination had at one time painted pleasant pictures of her seated at the head of his dinner-table. Now once more that fancy flitted before his mental vision. She was alone; she was friendless; she was living in poor lodgings (he had tracked her home twice, and made all sorts of inquiries about her, before actually confronting her); she was a woman, and surely subject to persuasion.

“Violet,” said he, and he stopped for a moment, “I give you my word of honour not to let a human being know—until you give me leave. Will that do?”

She took his hand, and pressed it warmly. She was grateful to him.

“And now,” she said, somewhat sadly, “before we part—and you must never seek to see me again—will you tell me something about—about my friends? It will be the last that I shall hear of them, I suppose.”

“Violet,” said he, with more impulse than was common with him, “I cannot bear to see you so miserable; you have not deserved it——”

“I am not miserable,” she said. “I should be more miserable if I were causing pain to those whom I love. And as for what I have deserved: well, who can tell that? I don’t see any one who gets just what he deserves. I know those who ought to have everything in the world, because they lead such noble and beautiful lives——”

He knew well to whom she was referring.

"—And I know others—well, you may call them unlucky perhaps—but they are not so distressed about their misery as they might be—if only they know—"

A sort of stifled sob arrested his attention. He had not seen that, underneath her veil, tears had been stealthily running down her cheeks.

"Violet," said he, "I am very sorry. And I don't understand why you should be unhappy. Nobody would have thought *you* were born one of the unlucky ones—"

"I am not unhappy," she asserted, making an effort to regain her composure. "Tell me how my father is. Is he in London? Have you been to Euston Square lately?"

He told her all he knew of the North family; and indeed he was pretty well acquainted with them, for he called upon Lady North and her daughters regularly. Then he paused.

"And Mr. Drummond—how is he?" she asked calmly, as they walked along.

"He has been very ill."

She stopped suddenly, as if some pain had throbbled through her heart.

"Is he ill now? Is he better?"

"Well," said he, telling an untruth that he had deliberately prepared, "I haven't exactly heard lately. It was rheumatic fever, I believe; he has been walking a great deal at night, and he got wet once or twice—"

"But—but you say he is better?" she said, and there was an urgent entreaty in her voice.

"I can't exactly tell you," he answered. "I have not been over there since they returned from Scotland; I only hear of them through Lady North. But if you like I will make inquiries—"

"Yes, yes!" she said, eagerly.

"And I can come and tell you."

"When? To-morrow? Can you ask to-morrow?"

He had gained his point. She was to see him again.

"Yes, I can make inquiries to-morrow,

and let you know in the evening. Where shall I see you? Can I call at your lodgings—or is there any friend's house—?"

"No," she answered, quickly. "We must meet here, I suppose."

"At the same hour?"

"Yes."

"And now, shall I walk up with you to Titchfield Street?"

She stared at him.

"How do you know I live there?" she asked, sharply.

"Well," said he, with an air of apology, "I had to make sure before I spoke to you;—I was anxious not to make any mistake—"

"Good-bye, then," said she, and she held out her hand. "You know you have given me your word of honour that no human being shall know what you have found out."

And so they parted; but she, instead of going straight to her lodgings in Great Titchfield Street, walked with surprising swiftness to Mrs. Roberts's hotel. She found that buxom dame disengaged, and begged a few minutes' talk of her. When they were in a room together, she quickly asked her companion to tell her all she knew about rheumatic fever. Was it dangerous? Did it last long? Was it painful? What brought it on? And so forth.

Most middle-aged women are extremely proud of their knowledge of diseases, and like to talk about them. Mrs. Roberts, wondering not a little at the extreme anxiety the girl showed, delivered a rambling sort of lecture on rheumatic fever, its causes, symptoms, and results.

"But—but you don't mean to say," said the girl, piteously, "that it *always* leaves behind it the seeds of lung disease or heart disease?"

"Oh, no, not always."

"One might recover from it, and become quite strong again!" she said, eagerly.

"Oh, yes, certainly."

"Especially if one were a man with a sound constitution, who had always

been in the habit of walking much in the open air—very much indeed. I should think now it was quite possible for a man to recover completely, and be quite as well as ever?"

"I believe so," said the landlady, with increasing wonder.

The girl sate silent for a moment or two.

"Is it so very, very painful, Mrs. Roberts?" she said, suddenly, with her hands clasped on her knees before her. "What can you do? Is there anything you can do? Can you buy anything for one who has that fever—and take him anything——"

Some wild notion that she would like to buy all the world if only that would mitigate the sufferings of her friend crossed the brain of this millionaire, this Croesus, who had 15*l.* sterling in her trunk.

"No," said Mrs. Roberts, looking at her, "not unless he was a poor man, and then you could see he had a good doctor, and money for the little delicacies an invalid needs——"

"He is not that," she said, absently.

A short time thereafter she took her leave, thanking Mrs. Roberts for her kindness. She walked across to Great Titchfield Street, and entered the house. As she was going up stairs she met her landlady's son, a small boy of ten or so; and she said to him—

"Tommy, I want you to do something for me. Come into my room, will you?"

She lit the gas, got out a sheet of paper, pen, and ink, and placed these on the table.

"Now, Tommy," said she, "I want you to write something for me like a good boy, and you shall have tea with me afterwards."

Tommy did not quite understand, but he obediently sat down at the table, and took the pen in hand.

"Write straight across the page, 'These flowers.'"

"*These flowers,*" the boy wrote.

"*'Are sent to Mr. Drummond.'*"

"*'Are sent to Mr. Drummond,'* he wrote, in his big, sprawling hand.

"*'From one.'*"

"*'From one.'*"

"*'Who received.'*"

"*'Who received.'*"

"*'Great kindness from him.'*"

"*'Great kindness from him.'*"

She was sitting on the sofa behind him as she dictated the words; he with his head bent over the paper. As she did not continue, he remained waiting for a second or two; and then, as she was still silent, he turned round. He saw then that she had fallen back on the couch, and was lying there as one dead, her face of a ghastly pallor, her arms extended by her side. The small boy was terribly frightened, and he ran out of the room, and down the stairs, until he found his mother.

"She's dead," he said.

"Who is dead?" the woman cried, with a slight scream.

"The lady. She is lying dead on the sofa."

It was not true, however, that the girl was dead. No such good fortune had befallen her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN A THEATRE.

MILLER had heard quite recently about Mr. Drummond; but he thought he might as well go up and call upon the Norths, just on the chance of their having received later news. So he went to Euston-square on the afternoon of the day following his interview with Violet; and there he was received by Anatolia.

"Mamma has just left," she said, "to go and see how Mr. Drummond is. I fear he is very ill."

"I must go and call on him too," said the young man, with some compunction. "We were not very good friends when we parted in the Highlands; but one must not mind that at such a time."

"That was a terrible thing, that visit to the Highlands," said Anatolia, with a sigh, for the girl, unlovely as she was of face, had a tender heart. "Poor Violet! We never knew how fond we

were of her until she was taken away from us. I suppose it is always so. Papa has never been the same man since ; I doubt whether he will ever get over it. He was fonder of her than of any one of us. And Mr. Drummond, too. Do you know what his sister told us!—that no one, since Violet was drowned, has ever seen him laugh."

Miller knew that his face was flushed with embarrassment ; he got away from that dangerous topic.

"It is true, I suppose, that he brought this fever on by walking about at night?"

"So his sister says. She says he always grew restless in the evening, just about the hour when they used to gather round the fire—that was, when Violet was living with them—and when they used to begin to talk and chat. And he could not remain quiet ; he would suddenly get up, put on his boots, and go out—no matter whether it was raining or not—and they never knew at what hour he would return in the morning. Sometimes they found his clothes in the morning soaked through."

"Well, that was enough to kill anybody," Miller said, he being a sensible young man, "and he ought to have known that. It was madness to go on like that—I cannot understand it. People are really very foolish about such things. You will find women—delicate women—going without anything to eat from ten in the morning till half-past seven at night simply because they won't take the trouble to order luncheon. Now, Mr. Drummond must have known that he was inviting an attack of illness of some sort."

"It was very strange how passionately fond of these people poor Violet was. They seemed to make up the whole of the world to her. And it was so sad to think that she came by her death through their kindness. You know, that is what troubles papa so much, I believe ; the thought that he should have allowed her to go away with them by herself ; but mamma says to him that, of course, it was a pure accident, such as might have happened to anyone, in any cir-

cumstances. I believe Mrs. Warrener was always against that bathing——"

"Still, it was not the bathing, you know," he said ; and then, after a few general inquiries, he left.

He met Violet in Great Marlborough Street ; and he could see that she was very anxious and excited.

"How is he?" she said, eagerly.

"He is no worse, anyhow," said the young man. "But look here, Violet. I have been thinking since I saw you last night that we cannot walk up and down here—I cannot talk to you properly ; and besides, some one might see you. Now, I went this afternoon and got a box at the Princess's—it is just over the way—will you go in there for half-an-hour?"

The proposal had something ghastly in it, from which she instinctively recoiled. To go to a theatre!—she who was wedded to sorrow, and the companion of sorrow.

"I could not do that," she said, almost shuddering.

"But look here, Violet ; no one can see you ; we shall be able to talk freely ; and you need not pay the least attention to the stage."

"They will see me as we go in," she said.

"Not a bit of it. Your veil is so thick that no one would recognise you, unless he was as familiar with your way of walking as I am. We have only to run up a few steps of a stair ; and then we are in the box, shut off from every one, and you can sit comfortably while I tell you all the news."

She hesitated ; but after all it seemed the lesser of the two evils. She did not at all like this business of meeting a young man by appointment, and walking up and down a pavement with him under the flashing glare of the gas-lamps. She might be safer in the theatre. Besides, the excitement of the previous evening had left her feverish and weak ; at the present moment she felt almost too tired to stand. And so, with some strange fancies and recollections running through her head, she suffered herself to be conducted into

this theatre, led up the stairs, and into the box.

The performances had not begun, and there were few people present; but the orchestra were pounding away at a noisy waltz, as if they would drive some animation into the deserted house. How the great violins groaned, and the little ones squealed, and the brazen instruments trumpeted out their staccato notes! To her there was a horrible dissonance in this music—it was a dance of death—the laughter of skulls.

And in the midst of this ghastly noise she heard all that George Miller had to tell her, or rather, all that he considered it prudent to tell her. He did not consider himself bound to tell Violet of what Mrs. Warren had told Anatolia North; Violet had not sent him on that quest; it was none of his business. She listened with an air of mute misery; her first eager anxiety had been sadly allayed.

The curtain was drawn up; a young man with white trousers and his hat on the side of his head appeared in a drawing-room, and began to flirt with a pert maid-servant, who was laying the breakfast-table. Perhaps it is only in theatrical drawing-rooms that young gentlemen wear their hats, and that people take their meals; but no matter. The dialogue was excessively funny. The gods roared at it. There was a joke about giving a bun to a cat, which was side-splitting.

"But you have not seen him to-day?" said Violet; she was sitting behind the curtain of the box, her head bent down, her hands tightly folded.

"No, I have not," he answered. "I have not been over there since they came back from the Highlands. But I will go over to-morrow, and in the evening I could tell you."

He was more and more rendering himself necessary to her; when he made this proposal she scarcely remembered that it would involve another appointment.

"It is so miserable not to be able to go and see him for one's self—I would give my life just to shake hands with

him once—only once," she said, with a gesture almost of despair. "Perhaps it would have been better if I had gone away without hearing of his being ill. I can do nothing. And now I cannot go away until I know he is better—I should be haunted with fears from morning till night."

"But where are you going, Violet?" said he, in amazement: there was something about the tone of her voice that struck him.

"I am going away," she said, simply, "away from England, and from every one that I ever knew, so that I shall remain to them as if I were really dead. When I die, they will never hear of it. When I leave England, you too must think of me as one that is dead."

At this moment there was a crash on the stage that startled him. The young man in the light trousers, to escape from the broom of the maid-servant, had jumped out of window, and apparently fallen through a conservatory. There was a great smashing of glass; and the people in the gallery again screamed with laughter. The fun was too rich.

"Oh, that is folly," he said; but he thought it prudent not to argue with her just at that moment. He would rather endeavour to entangle her into relations with himself; and just then a happy notion occurred to him.

"Look here, Violet. It is only half-past seven. If you are so anxious to know how he is, what do you say to driving over there with me, and I will go in and ask? I could get you a hired carriage in about twenty minutes—that would be so much more comfortable than a cab. You will have to go home first in any case—to have your tea or dinner, or whatever you have. Then I could call for you."

It was a strong temptation; she was so eager to have authentic news of her friend in his trouble. And then there was some sort of fascination in the idea of her being near him—of seeing once more the familiar small house—of looking even from the outside at rooms

which she had learned to love. Yes, she would go.

"But you must not call for me," she said. "At eight o'clock I will be at the corner of Oxford Street and Great Portland Street: will that do?"

"Certainly."

They left the box; it is to be hoped that the artists on the stage were not insulted; these two who were going away had no intention of expressing their disapproval of that mirth-provoking performance.

Punctually at eight she appeared at the appointed place; and she had not to wait more than a minute or so.

"I have been thinking," she said, when she got inside, "that I must not go near the house. Will you tell the man to drive up Denmark Hill, and put me out at Champion Hill? I will wait for you there."

"I will do whatever you like, Violet," said he. "But I really don't know, mind you, whether I am right in becoming a party to all this secrecy. I never heard of such a thing in my life. I can't understand it."

She did not answer that there were many things which even Mr. Miller, with all his shrewdness and his knowledge of club life, could not understand. She answered, simply,

"You have given me your promise; I hope you are not considering whether you would be justified in breaking that?"

"Oh, no, not at all," said he, quickly. "Of course, you have my promise. That's quite right. But really, you know, Violet——"

"Would you rather not drive me over to Champion Hill?" she said. "If it is any trouble to you—if you think you ought not to go—pray stop the man at once. I can walk back to my lodgings."

"Violet," said he, and there was a friendly smile on his face, "you are just the same as ever. Do you remember one drive we took together long ago? Do you remember proposing to stop the man before we had been ten minutes on the way? You were always proud, and quick.

Now you know I will do anything to serve you. It was in your own interest I remonstrated with you. Why should you go away? Why shouldn't you tell your friends? They would be delighted to forgive you for all the grief they have suffered in the gladness of seeing you again."

The gentleness and friendliness of his speech touched her; but she only said, in a sad and resigned way—

"You do not know all that drove me to take that step; it is no use speaking of that now. Yes, I remember that drive—it seems a long time ago; but I always think of the day as a white one, the air was so clear and full of light. What children we were—quarrelling about nothing—and enjoying the mischief of running away. My father was very good to you in overlooking that escapade. I think he was amused at the audacity with which you went and told him all about it. You did not see him to-day?"

"No."

"Poor papa!"

She remained silent for some time; and by and by they got down to Westminster Bridge. It was the first time she had seen the river since her visit to Scotland. Now a faint moonlight showed the Houses of Parliament, and the Embankment, and the broad stream in hues of blue and grey; and there were far lines of gas-lamps burning like threaded jewels of gold; and there were rich, soft shadows lying along the houses and wharves of the Surrey side.

"I have seen the river so often like that; it is a beautiful sight!" she said, absently; she was thinking that in the distant country to which she was going, she would be able to conjure up this picture of blue-grey mist and golden stars.

When they drove, too, out by Kennington Church, and so onwards to Denmark Hill, she seemed to be renewing acquaintance with scenes once familiar to her, and doing so only to bid them good-bye. Perhaps she was looking at them for the last time: or could she not come over once more—just on

the eve of her departure—to leave those flowers, and the rudely-written message, at the threshold of the house of her friend and her beloved one, as a mute token of farewell?

Under the great trees, up here on the brow of the hill, there was abundant shadow; and she got out from the carriage.

"Shan't you be afraid to remain here all by yourself?" said he.

"Not at all."

"I may be some time——"

"Yes," said she, quickly. "I hope you will be able to see him—and tell me how he looks—and what he speaks about. I will wait any time—I will wait an hour, if that is necessary—and indeed I am greatly obliged to you——"

He left her, and she continued pacing up and down, under the trees, in the chill night. Then she walked along to the top of Green Lane; and behold! before her stretched the broad valley, filled with the grey mist of the moonlight, and silent as death. The old refrain came back to her, to deepen the sore pain at her heart. *Far away in the beautiful meadows is the house of my home—many a time I went out from it into the valley. O you beautiful, still valley, I greet you a thousand times. Farewell—farewell!*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN EPITAPH.

MRS. WARRENER came into the room looking pale and tired. She was dressed in deep mourning—that was for Violet. And when she saw this young man standing before her, she was for a moment or two deeply moved; it was in very different circumstances—which his presence now instantly recalled to her—that they had last met.

He made no apology to her for not having visited them before; he felt that any personal matter of his own was too trivial to need mention. He said how sorry he was to have heard that her brother was ill; and how was he now?

"Sit down, Mr. Miller," said the

small, pale, anxious-eyed woman. "He is just about the same this evening. He is very low indeed; but the doctor says he must have had a fine constitution, and he is making a good fight. You see he brought himself down so by these walkings-out at night; and we could not prevent him——"

"Of course, there is no actual danger?" said the young man.

"I think not now," was the answer. "I think he is well on the turn; but his mind wanders a good deal yet. Well, well, some sad changes have taken place since we last saw you, Mr. Miller."

The little woman sighed; it was not alone of her brother she was thinking.

"Yes," said he, rather uncomfortably; he hoped she would not speak about Violet.

"It is only quite recently," she continued, "that I have discovered—well, perhaps there is no use talking about it now. What might have been, if our poor Violet had lived—there is not much use in talking about that now. But it made me very unhappy at the time, to see you and her at cross-purposes. I could see that she was greatly troubled by it. She is at rest now."

"Well, I must not take you away from the sick-room, Mrs. Warrener, if you are attending upon your brother," said Mr. Miller.

"I am not at present," she said—somehow she seemed to be glad of the young man's presence: he was a link between her and happy times. "The nurse has gone in. Lady North was over here to-day. They have given up all hope of finding poor Violet's body. If she were alive, I know where the poor girl would be at this moment. And how my brother talks about her in his rambling fancies—he sees her everywhere, he connects her with everything. Yes, I made a great mistake about that; I had no idea his love for the girl was anything beyond a friendly affection; but even if she had lived, what then? The only thing I am sorry for now is that you and she had not made up your misunderstanding before the end."

When she said she knew where

Violet would be at that moment, supposing the girl were alive, a sort of superstitious fear overcame him. He could almost imagine her listening outside the window to hear the news of her friend. If some one had knocked at the door just then, he would have jumped up and said, "There is Violet!"

"I suppose I may not see him for a minute or so," he said, for he was determined to execute his commission thoroughly.

"Oh dear yes," she said, at once. "But I am afraid he will not recognise you. The delirium has been rather bad this evening; though he is not nearly so weak as he was. Will you please leave your hat here?—a black hat always sets him off into fancies about undertakers."

He followed her into the sick-room; and, as they entered, the nurse left. There was no need for the young man to walk so noiselessly; the long, outstretched figure on the bed took no apparent notice of his presence. But young Miller went over to the bed, and took up one of the thin, bony hands, and said—

"I am glad to hear you are getting better, Mr. Drummond."

There was no languid indifference and apathy about this patient. The cheeks were a trifle hollow, but they were flushed as if with some excitement; and there was a brilliant light in the large, restless, scrutinising eyes; and as George Miller spoke, an amused smile came to the thin pale lips.

"You are young Miller, I do believe," said Mr. Drummond, looking curiously at his visitor.

"Yes, I am glad to hear you have got over the worst now," said the young man, saying what every one is supposed to say to an invalid. "You must pull yourself together now, and fight the illness right out of the house."

"I had a strange dream about you, young Miller," said the sick man, not heeding the counsel, "a very strange dream about you to-day, and about your cigars. Do you remember that big cigar that stretched across the valley from

Sydenham Hill all the way to Grove Park? and you couldn't have held it up except for the moonlight helping you—that was when Violet and the rest of us were walking on the ice, and you said that Chamounix was nothing to it. Do you know that stamping out the fire in the end of that cigar was murder—the poor, piteous, small red eye that you have to hunt for, and it comes through the black again, and you kill it and stamp on it: that is murder? These dreams trouble one so; and after you have crept and crept all round the headland—creeping flat through the brackens—and you signal Jimmy to bring the boat along—then all the curlew get up, and a great heron rises with its long legs hanging down in the air—then just as you have him covered with the gun, and you are trying to pull the trigger, and the trigger won't go off, then down goes the heron into the water, and dives like a merganser, and you never see him again. The water becomes quite blank then; and you may walk day after day along the rocks, and you will see nothing at all there; you will only hear the plashing of the waves, and they know, but they will not give up the secret. It is a terrible thing the silence of the shores, just after daybreak, if you are alone, and looking and looking, and finding nothing but the continual noise of the waves."

His eyes had wandered away by this time; but he again directed his attention to his visitor, and seemed to make some effort to arouse himself.

"Young Miller, why don't you sit down? Sarah, have we no wine in the house?"

"Thank you, I would rather not have any," said the young man. "You must try and get rid of those dreams, Mr. Drummond. Don't pay any attention to them. You know Christmas is coming on now; and you must get well and strong, to have a merry Christmas party."

"Is he coming along?" he said, absently. "The tall white man in the winding-sheet? That is a ghastly sort of figure to come as a guest to a party;

and there is snow about him, and he walks through the night . . . through the night, and then the stars are as silent as the waves are, and they will not give up the secret to you—you may cry to them, and stretch out your hands to them—it is no use at all—”

His sister came over to him, and placed her cool hand gently on his forehead.

“James,” she said, “you must not talk any more now. You must be still.”

He turned to his visitor, whom he did not seem to recognise now.

“I beg your pardon, sir, if I have been talking too much. It is an old failing of mine—I hope you will forgive me. There was one once who used to like to listen to me—at least I thought so—she is gone away now—perhaps I am too talkative to strangers.”

He remained silent for a short time; but only for a short time; for the restless fancy that drove him from topic to topic, from one speculation to another, in his moments of health and sanity, was rendered all the more morbidly active by this disease.

“Sarah,” said he, quickly, “I want you to read me that epitaph—I think there is something wrong in it—I am sure there is. I am sorry to give you the trouble; but I must finish it to-night, you know.”

To humour him, she took down a card that he had nailed up over the mantelpiece. It was an epitaph on the whole race of publishers. She read it slowly; and from time to time he corrected her accentuation of the Latin.

“I knew it,” he said, dreamily, “it is all wrong. That was not what I meant at all. Now, Sarah, take a pen and some paper, and I will tell you what to write down.”

“No, no, James,” his sister remonstrated. “Another time will do very well. You must be still now.”

“It will only take a minute,” he pleaded. “I have it all ready; I have dreamed it. I knew the other was all wrong.”

“Leave it over till to-morrow,” said

young Miller, gently; but the sick man paid no attention to him.

So Mrs. Warren got the sheet of paper and sat down at the small table.

“What shall I write then, James?”

“It is the epitaph; but not in Latin; for it ought to be known and read by everyone. Write now—are you ready, Sarah?”

“Yes, dear.”

“The sea that bore her away from us was not half as clear as her clear and beautiful soul—”

He paused till the words were down; and then he went on, his look still directed towards her.

“And the dark softness of her eyes was large, and mild, and generous, like the darkness of the night when it hushes the poor tired children of the world to sleep. Now she has gone, to some of us it seems as if the very light of our life had gone too—Sarah, why do you cry? The bitterness of it is past now; at least, if it is not, it must be hidden; and we must put a brave face on it; the world shall have no part in the secret, even if it should lie like a fire in your bosom, and burn, and burn, and drive you out into the cold night-air. I think it was last night I was out . . . and there was a voice I could hear somewhere in the dark—but it was far and far away. . . . Do you know what it said?—O Willie’s gone to Melville Castle, boots and spurs and a’—but it was far away, and there was no laughing in the song. But they had a great deal of laughter in these songs; and in the old time lovers were gay and joyous, and even when he was parting from his sweetheart, what did the jovial fellow say—

*‘Gae bring to me a pint of wine,
And fill it in a silver lassie,
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonnie lassie!’*

That was the gallant way of saying good-bye; but it is all changed now—the poor trembling girl stands in a railway-station, and the whistle of the engine as the train leaves seems to rend her heart in two; and the young man, he stands on the deck of the steamer,

and as the engines begin to throb, he can see nothing of his sweetheart on shore for the tears rushing into his eyes. The world is very full of all this misery; I don't know how the old people in the old times wrote those merry songs. But there is an end to it—there is an end; and the cruel pain in the heart will leave; and the sound of the waves will no longer haunt one—there will be peace, and sleep.”

He turned his head away, and lay still; George Miller seized the opportunity of slipping out of the room, and Mrs. Warrener followed him, the nurse returning to her duties.

“It is very sad,” said Miller, casting about for some phrase of consolation, “but he does not appear to be suffering much pain.”

“Not now; at one time it was dreadful. Did you notice how these fancies about poor Violet run through all he says?”

“Yes, it is very strange, and very sad. Well, I hope, Mrs. Warrener, to hear better news when I call next.”

He bade her good-bye, and went out into the chill December air. The moonlight was clearer up here than it had been over the Thames valley; in a few minutes after leaving Mr. Drummond's house, he descried Violet slowly pacing along the empty thoroughfare. When he reached her, her anxiety had so tortured her, that she was unable to ask him the simplest question. She only stared at his face, as if she would read there what news he had to bring.

“He is very ill, no doubt,” said he, “but not in danger—not actually in danger, you know, Violet. He wanders a little, you know, as a feverish person will, when he speaks to you; but he suffers not much pain now, and I hope he has got through all the worst of it.”

“Do you mean,” said she, slowly, “that he is delirious?”

“Well, yes——”

“And there is nothing one can do—nothing!” she said, almost wildly. “Do you know what it is to have sympathy with one who is ill?—it is this, that if you could save him a single

pang, you would gash your wrist through with a knife—and—and I would do that! Oh, it is terrible—terrible. Here we are standing—here—in a beautiful night—everything quiet and pleasant—and both of us well and strong; and there he is lying with that deadly thing trying to poison him, and we are quite helpless! I flung away my friends, my home, everything I cared for, to save him anxiety and care; now his very life is in danger, and I can do nothing at all!”

She was speaking in a strangely excited way; but he did not fail to take note of these involuntary confessions. Perhaps his own hopes were rather dashed for the time; but he would wait and see.

“It is not quite so bad as that, Violet,” said he. “I don't suppose his life is actually in danger now; and—and he does not suffer much pain; and altogether you must hope for the best.”

She seemed scarcely to listen to him. She stepped into the carriage, and took her seat, in silence; and in silence she was driven across the great world of London. His attempts to interest her in various alien matters met with but little success; there was a great care at her heart; and the shadow of it clouded her brow and troubled her anxious eyes.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PREPARATIONS FOR FLIGHT.

MR. GEORGE MILLER had been plunged into all this business with much suddenness, and had had but little time to reflect. When, however, he came to regard his position with care and deliberation, the longer he looked at it the less he liked it. At first he had considered it to be one of great advantage. He alone knew of this girl's whereabouts—of the very fact of her existence even: what more natural than that she, homeless, friendless, and penniless, should cling to this one friend, who, in due course of time, would be proud to lead the truant back as his wife? He soon came to see that these speculations were

useless. To her he was merely a messenger—a go-between. She was exceedingly grateful to him; but it was only because he brought her tidings of James Drummond. All her interest, her very life, seemed to be wrapped up in this man.

Now George Miller, being a cool-headed, shrewd, sensible sort of fellow, when he saw that matters stood thus, began to look with some anxiety, and even annoyance, on the awkward responsibility he had incurred. It was all very well for him to promise not to reveal Violet's secret; for then he only wanted to gain time, that so he might talk her over. But she would not even allow him to argue the matter with her. So it came to this, that he was to be made an accomplice in an act of cruel folly, the like of which he had never heard before. That he "could not understand" was to him a sufficient condemnation of Violet's resolve. He did not see the use of all this mystery. She herself was obviously unhappy in going away; why could she not, like a reasonable person, get into a four-wheeled cab, drive up to Euston-square, declare herself to her father, and have a comfortable luncheon, instead of sitting all day in a cold shop? But no; she would not even hear him speak of it. She had given him, on their first and second meetings, some vague hints as to the causes of her conduct; beyond that, nothing. And while he was inclined to become impatient over what he considered to be her folly, there were times at which he did not even try to protest, for he was overawed by the tragic despair of her face.

If George Miller had no love of mystery, Mr. Edward Dowse had plenty; and despite Miller's reiterated assertions that the Miss Main in that Regent Street place was not the Miss Main whom he had met in bygone years, young Dowse still clung to the fancy that Miller must know something about the girl.

"Well, she knows somebody in this club," said young Dowse, doggedly.

George Miller was vexed and angry to

have Violet spoken of at a club, even under the name of Miss Main; but he dared not show his vexation.

"How do you know that?" said he lightly.

"From the way she looked whenever the club was mentioned. Oh, I am sure of it; and I shall find out, sooner or later."

"Write a poem about it, Dowse; write a poem about it," said George Miller.

This was sarcasm. Miller had a fine contempt for a man who could sit down in the day-time and bother his brains with piecing rhymes together. Indeed, he did not at all care for the society of Mr. Edward Dowse. He did not like to be seen in the club with a man who wore a Byronic collar and combed his ridiculously profuse hair down over his face.

Perhaps there was a spice of mischief in the proposal which Edward Dowse placed before his mother, to the effect that she should ask Miss Main, and that he should ask Mr. George Miller, to come down to the Laurels on the same day, without previous intimation of the meeting.

"No, no, Teddy," his mother said, good-naturedly. "That is all your romantic notions. You would find them strangers to each other; and Mr. Miller might not like to meet at dinner a young lady whom he might afterwards see at the desk in Regent Street. Not that that is against her, so far as I am concerned, I am sure. I like the girl—she is most lady-like—"

"Oh, you know quite well, mother, she was not brought up to that kind of thing."

"But I'll tell you what I'll do, Teddy, if you like," continued his mother, "I will ask her to spend Christmas Day here. The poor girl must be dull in her lodgings."

Well, Teddy approved of that. He had not the slightest notion in the world of falling in love with Miss Main; but her presence in this remote little country-house would be an agreeable break to its monotony. Who

could tell, too, but that some element of the unexpected might be introduced into their Christmas festivities by this mysterious guest? On Christmas-night thoughts and fancies go far away; perhaps, in a sudden moment of confidence, she might be induced to tell them her story. That would tend to redeem the commonplaceness of the evening; a Christmas dinner, consisting only of roast turkey, champagne, and plum-pudding was a poor affair.

But Mr. Dowse, senior, who was commissioned to carry the invitation to Violet, added, or rather prefixed, something on his own account.

"Miss Main," said he, with a sort of facetious heartiness, "do you know you have been looking very unwell lately? Do you know that? Well, we can't have an invalid on our hands; people coming into the place would say that the contemplation of good designs in furniture had a bad effect on the spirits. Come, what do you say to taking a holiday or two, and running down to stay with Mrs. Dowse? You will get a hearty welcome. Come, is it to be a bargain?"

The girl looked up from her desk; she had been reading a newspaper, having nothing else to do at the moment.

"I am sure it is very kind of you, Mr. Dowse—and of Mrs. Dowse, too; but I assure you I don't feel at all unwell at present."

"But I assure you I know you are not all right—you look troubled, fatigued. Come, think better of it."

"I could not leave London at present, sir," she said. "I—I have a dear friend who is unwell——"

"I am sorry to hear that," said he. He was surprised. He had understood that she had not a single friend in London. But, taking it for granted that it was some lady friend, he added, "Well, at any time you may think of visiting her, you ought to do so during the day. These cold and misty nights are dangerous."

"Thank you very much," said she; she was glad to have no further demand for explanation.

"And here is another thing. Mrs. Dowse would be glad if you would spend Christmas Day with us——"

"It is really too good of you—of you both, sir," said the girl, who was very much touched by this spontaneous kindness on the part of people who were practically strangers to her. "I think, however, I must ask you to excuse me——"

He regarded her for a moment with some doubt.

"You have some friends, then, with whom you will spend Christmas?"

"N—no, not exactly," she stammered.

"You don't mean to say you prefer to spend Christmas-evening all by yourself in your lodgings?" said Mr. Dowse, with some amazement.

"Perhaps—I—I don't prefer it," she said, with such obvious embarrassment that he resolved not to press the invitation—"but—if you will tell Mrs. Dowse how much I thank her. I am afraid I cannot accept her kindness this time."

So there was no more said on that subject in Regent Street. The whole position of the girl, however, was a fruitful topic of speculation, led by Mr. Dowse, junior, in the Berkshire drawing-room of an evening. It was observed, among other things, that she never availed herself of that permission to go and see her sick friend in the daytime.

A few days passed, and a brighter look came to Miss Main's face. She began to regain her old cheerful equanimity; she was as vivacious as ever in discussing those combinations of colour and form about which father and son occasionally consulted her. They guessed that her sick friend was getting better. And they were right. That fierce fever had been at last overthrown in its wrestle with a fine constitution.

As George Miller carried, from time to time, this news to Violet North, he, too, could notice the growing light of her face, and the proud gladness of her eyes.

"He will go away from London when the mild spring weather comes in, will he not?" she said. "Away to the south, perhaps? Or is there any air so soft

and sweet as that in the western Highlands? Perhaps he will go away in the *Sea-Pyot* again—to Loch Salen and Ornsay, and Kyle Rhea——”

“And you,” said he, “where shall you be then?”

Her eyes grew distant, but not sad.

“No one will know that; and no one will care. And you must go and become great friends with Mr. Drummond again. When I think of you, I shall think of you always as a holiday-party; and either you are out on the hills shooting with old Peter, or else you are away in the yacht, sailing round the islands, and getting into quiet bays in the evening. Mind you, I shall always think of you as having bright and beautiful weather, and of your being very merry——”

“And what shall we think of you?”

“Nothing at all,” she said, quite cheerfully. “You cannot always be mourning for dead people.”

“I suppose you have not considered,” he said, with some bitterness, “what my position will be. I shall see your relations and friends still saddened by thinking of your death, and know that I could with a word relieve them from this grief, and be unable to do so. I shall see them wearing black; and become a party to a hoax——”

“All that will pass by,” she said. “It cannot last long; and poor Anatolia will be glad to get out of black, because it does not suit her complexion. Poor Anatolia! I suppose she speaks quite kindly of me now?”

“She does indeed.”

“And Lady North too?”

“Certainly.”

“There now,” she said, with a sad smile. “Don’t you see what good I have done already? When I was with them—when I was alive—I was the cause of all sorts of quarrelling and ill-temper; now they have forgotten all that; I have no doubt they would put some flowers on my grave if only they knew where to find it.”

He could find nothing at all jocular in the affair; but his anxiety and embarrassment at this moment arose from selfish motives rather than from any

generous desire to restore Violet to her friends. As each day passed, he saw the time of her intended flight coming nearer; and he grew more and more to dread the responsibility that had been thrust on him. He did not like having his hands cumbered with a mystery. For the rest of his life he would have to become a practised hypocrite in all his relations with some dozen persons whom he would be constantly meeting. All this annoyed him; and he knew that in a short time his last chance of protest would disappear.

In fact, on this very evening, things reached a climax. Just before they parted, Violet paused for a moment, and said to him, with some earnestness——

“You must let me thank you most warmly for all this kindness you have shown me. I shall never forget it.”

“Well, mind you,” said he, “I have expressed no approval of your conduct. I think you are very wrong. I did what you asked me; but—but I am not responsible——”

“I understand,” she said, quickly. “The responsibility is mine. Well, I am going to ask you for another favour. Will you lend me a hundred pounds?”

“A hundred pounds!” he said, but it was not the amount of the demand that caused his astonishment.

“Yes,” she said, calmly. “I will return it you when I can; but if you lend it me, it may be some time before I can repay you. It will be a great favour. I have been saving up money from my earnings to take me out of England, so that I should escape the risk of further discovery; but it is a slow process. If you lent me this money I could start at once. I am anxious to go, now that I know Mr. Drummond is better.”

The young man remained silent. His first impulse was to say, “You shall have a thousand!” for he could not brook the idea of her considering him mean. Had he been better acquainted with the girl’s nature, he would have known that such an idea could never have occurred to her. However, a

moment's reflection checked this impulse; for he saw how the loan of this money would involve him more deeply than ever in a responsibility which he was anxious to repudiate altogether.

"You must give me time to think about that," said he; and then he added, hastily, "Of course, you know, Violet, it isn't the money. You might have that, or anything else of mine, and welcome; but—but——"

"It is merely a question of time," she said, calmly. "I am leaving England, and I shall never return to it. If you lend me this money, I shall go a little sooner, that is all. If you don't, I must wait."

"Yes," said he, with considerable embarrassment. "But then you see I am helping to render it impossible for your friends to reclaim you. There is always the chance——"

"How can there be any chance, if you do not tell them? And I have trusted to your honour as regards that."

"There is always the chance, though," he said, stubbornly. "Look at the chance that threw me in your way. Don't you see, Violet, that the Dowses know quite well you were not brought up to be a clerk? They know you belong to some good family—that there is a secret about it. And of course they will go on talking, until they run against somebody who knows you—just as young Dowse did in my case——"

"That is the greater reason why I should get away at once."

"But it is the very reason why I should not help you; because I believe you are acting wrongly; and I don't like to have any part in it."

"Then I must wait," she said, in rather disappointed tones. "Perhaps Mr. Dowse would lend it me—he is a very generous man."

"Give me till to-morrow, Violet," said Miller. "Or let me see. It is the night after to-morrow I have to tell you about Mr. Drummond?"

"Yes," she said, "I hope that will be the last time I shall have to trouble you."

"I will tell you about the money then."

They parted; and he went home to his rooms in Half-Moon Street with some serious trouble on his mind. It was quite clear that, now Mr. Drummond was getting better, she would if she were given this money, leave England at once. His aiding her in this project was an exceedingly grave matter. On the other hand, his personal pride was touched. Could he at any time have believed that Violet North would condescend to ask him for a sum of money, and that he would refuse her? Did she think he was afraid of not having it back again? She had spoken of Mr. Dowse as a generous man: was there not some contrast lurking in her thoughts?

Then he began to argue out the matter on a different line. If he lent her the money, he was not responsible for the application of it. The gunsmith who sells a man a revolver with which a murder is subsequently committed is no accessory to the crime. He had protested with all his might against this project of hers. After all, and in any case, he was not going to have it said of himself, by himself, that an old friend of his had demanded the loan of a paltry hundred pounds and been refused.

On the evening on which he was to see Violet—for the last time, according to her expressed wish—he went over to James Drummond's house, and made the usual inquiries. The answer was in every way favourable. Though the patient was still exceedingly weak, still he was slowly getting on towards recovery; and would he care to go in and see his sick friend for a few minutes?

"Well, young Miller," said Mr. Drummond, "have you come to play the Good Samaritan again? Young men of your age ought to be at the theatre, and balls, and that kind of thing, instead of visiting sick-rooms. Or are you fond of tragedy?—only there would scarcely have been anything tragic in the death of such a frail and helpless victim as myself. Look at my hands. I believe the executioner took pity on me even after he had my head on the block—gave me a sort of parting kick, as it

were, as a poor devil that wasn't worth wasting his strength on. Sit down, and tell me what is going on. I am not allowed to read yet, and my sister and Amy—well, you know how women begin to read the newspapers to you—I believe they would begin with the advertisements, and then go on to the police-news."

The large, fine eyes were as keen and bright as ever, but there was nothing in them of that restless fire which Miller had seen on his first visit. And the quick intelligence of this strange invalid was as much on the alert as ever; though there was a tired and pale look on his face, and his emaciated hands lay helplessly on the white coverlet.

Young Miller told him something of what was going forward in the outside world, and he showed great interest in it. But what struck his visitor as most peculiar in this random conversation was the fashion in which Mr. Drummond managed to introduce, on more than one occasion, and especially when his sister was in the room, references to the delirium from which he had suffered, and the necessity of persons guarding themselves against the presumption that anything said during delirium must have some basis of fact behind it.

"Can't you imagine frightful mischief arising," he said, "from some foolish wife believing that certain things uttered by her husband when he was in a delirious state must be partly true or founded in truth—that he had committed some crime for example? Don't you think that it is some small mistake of this sort that often leads up to some dreadful tragedy, apparently without explanation? Now, take the case of a husband who is annoyed by the pertinacious curiosity of his wife, who is continually prying into his correspondence about the most commonplace affairs. To punish her he forges one or two letters, clear evidence of an intrigue, and places them in his desk. What does she do? Why, go out and drown herself; and there you have a tragedy arising out of a mere joke. It is only the whipper-snapper in criticism

who is always crying out for a grand and tremendous motive, take my word for it. The greatest tragedies of life arise out of the most trivial things. You know the most appalling tragedy in the world—the destruction of the great host of the Nibelungen, who marched away from the Rhineland to be the guests of King Etzel and his revengeful wife—what did that arise out of?—only a taunt flung at one angry woman by another, which was immediately disavowed, too, by the first woman's husband. You don't know that I once wrote a tragedy?"

"No."

"I did. It has mingled with the elementary forces of nature by this time, for I burned it. And another objection was about the 'unities.' Gracious goodness! do you find any of the great masters, when they look abroad on the beautiful and diverse world, limiting themselves to such material as is necessary to some small and mechanical plot? I think it is the odd characters—the people who have no business there—that I love the most; for unless the author loved them too, he would not go out of his way to drag them in. What on earth has Autolycus to do with the plot of *A Winter's Tale*?—and yet I don't know anybody I have such a sneaking fondness for as Autolycus. I wish he lived in the parish of Camberwell. He should dine with me every day, and the spoons would be at his disposal. Then look at the first gravedigger in *Hamlet*: how could we do without the gravedigger?"

"Not very well," said Miller, with a modest smile; "we must have him sooner or later."

"Young Miller," observed the recumbent invalid, "when you are bent on making jokes, please to remember that I have just missed making the acquaintance of the gravedigger by a hairsbreadth, and that I may have suddenly to turn round and shake hands with him, thanking him beforehand for allotting me so much of his valuable space, as the people say who write to the newspapers. Then there is the

melancholy Jacques—I have always had a great regard for my namesake ; but I don't see that he affects the action of the story very much. The 'unities'——"

"But how did they criticise your tragedy if it was never published?"

"Why, don't you know that there are critics who buffet your book before it is published, and critics who jump on it afterwards? My beautiful tragedy suffered so much from the first that I determined it should not reach the second. I liberated it. Now I can imagine portions of it floating as down on a butterfly's wing ; and other portions appearing in the petals of a primrose ; and others forming part of the pink flush in a young girl's cheek. My tragedy will never die. If I had published it now, what would have been the result? I should know that, although I bought in every copy I could lay my hands on, the people at the British Museum would tenaciously cling to that evidence of my stupidity. I will admit that my hero was an ass—and a sonorous, self-conceited ass, too—let's see, what was his name——"

But here Mrs. Warrener broke in upon this random talk by entering the room with some medicine in her hand. He took the glass from her and swallowed the stuff.

"Another compliment to my doctor," he said, "I take it only to please him—I am certain it has not the least effect upon me. But if a man carries you across a river, and then tells you he was able to do it because he had a tobacco-stopper in his pocket, you are bound to respect the tobacco-stopper."

"You seem to be getting on very well," said young Miller, cheerfully.

"My great ambition," said the invalid, "is to get a white collar on—a regularly starched, stiff, stuck-up collar, as hard as iron and as white as snow ; I have got so tired of these half-tinted, wretched, soft, cotton things I have been swathed in——"

"Well, James," said his sister, "I hope when you get better you don't mean to be more particular about your

collars and shirts than before, for indeed there was never any pleasing you. You don't care what sort of coat you wear, nor what sort of hat, but your linen and your boots, there is no pleasing you with them."

"And I am looking forward, too, to the first draught of bitter ale I am allowed. Do you remember that sensation—the first draught at luncheon on the first day of the shooting, after all the heat and the toil? No, you were not up with us on the 12th."

He grew silent after that, and thoughtful. Young Miller, with some words of hope and encouragement, took his leave, and made his way across London to the neighbourhood of Regent Street.

It was the last time he was to see Violet, and he carried in his pocket the sum of money which was to free her from the necessity of remaining longer in London. Nay, he carried double that sum, for, he said to himself, if there was any mischief to be done by the 100*l.* no greater could be done by 200*l.* ; and he would show her that it was not the value of the money that had made him pause. And yet, as he walked up and down Great Marlborough Street (she had refused to go again into the theatre) in expectation of her, he was not a little anxious and agitated. The chances of any one now interfering to relieve him from the responsibility he had incurred were small indeed. She would start at once ; how could anybody trace her after she left New York? When he gave her that promise he was convinced he could talk her out of a determination which he considered to be the height of folly ; he had failed in that, and now he saw no prospect of her releasing him at all.

The question now was—Ought this promise to be kept? Young Miller was not much of a casuist ; but he had some shrewd common sense. He knew there were occasions on which people might legitimately do something not quite "straight." There were innocent forms of deception. He thought this was too bad. It wasn't quite fair to him or to anybody. She ought not to expect that

the temporary promise was to last for ever. As he walked up and down, he pretty nearly worked himself into the conviction that, at all risks, he ought to go and tell the girl's father.

Now if he had had some male confidant of his own stamp, with whom he could have debated this question, there can be little doubt that he would have gone and told the girl's father. His friend would have said to him—

"Oh, look here, Miller, you cannot let the girl go like that. If your conscience is tender about your promise, you must do evil that good may come. Lots of people do that. You tell lies to sick people to make them hope. This is all nonsense; go away and tell the girl's father at once."

Nay, if the promise had been given to a man, under similar circumstances, it is probable that Miller, without any counsel, would so have acted. But it was different with a girl, and that girl Violet North. He could imagine the look of contempt with which she would hear that he had broken his word. He was afraid of her scorn. In the midst of these deliberations, Violet appeared.

"He is still going on favourably?" she said, gently; he had been so occupied in thinking of her anger that he was surprised by the sad sweetness of her voice.

"Oh, first rate," said he. "Talking away as fast as ever—it is no use urging him to be quiet. And I suppose there is no great harm in talking; it is the thinking that is the matter; for his brain still has some symptoms of feverishness left, and goes on at such a pace that he can't get sleep. That is weakness, you know, feverishness—a man can't sleep well unless he has exercise. But in other respects he is going on wonderfully well."

Then there was an awkward pause.

"Violet," said he, with some embarrassment, "I have brought you the money. Since you have asked it, here it is; and if you are really going, 100% is not enough—I have brought you 200%."

"I am very grateful to you," she

said, as she took the envelope containing the notes. "I will send it you back again by degrees; and I know you won't hurry me."

At this moment a sudden thought flashed into his mind that had never occurred to him before. If she posted these instalments from time to time, would not he thus be able to get some approximate notion of her whereabouts in America? That was something—but not much, considering the vow under which she would leave him.

"Now, Violet," said he, "you are free to go; and I suppose this will be the last chance I shall have of begging you to consider what you are doing."

"I have considered," she said, sadly.

"To tell you the truth," he said, rather excitedly, "I have been considering too, and really, if it comes to that, I don't know that I am right in—"

"Do you mean," she said, calmly, "that you have been considering whether you will break your word of honour?"

"Well," he said, with some compunction, "I—I—understood it was to be temporary."

"I had no such understanding," she replied, "nor did you say anything about that."

"It is very hard——" he was beginning to say, when she interrupted him.

"Pray let us part friends," she said, with a sudden appeal in her voice. "You have been very kind to me—be kind now!"

"And you won't even let me know where you are to be found in America, suppose anything were to turn up?"

"No," she said. "I am to be as one dead to you, and to all here. In a year or two it will not matter; you will have forgotten. And before that, too, I must think of you all as happy and enjoying yourselves—as I told you before—shooting wild duck, going to the Royal Academy, dining with Lady North—in everything that may happen to you, I shall always think of you, as I hope and pray you may always be, pleased, and happy, and contented."

Now, good-bye, I am more grateful to you than I can tell you—you have been kind to me——”

She was gone—he was left standing there, bewildered. Somehow, though there was not much sentiment in his nature, he felt sick at heart. It was hard to lose this beautiful friend who had for a time been mixed up with his boyish dreams. He pictured her going out alone to the unknown world of America—not one human being there to meet her and take her by the hand. He thought of her lonely life in that far country—of the years adding to her loneliness, for he had a sort of feeling that she would never marry—until the final night came, and she would pass away without one of her own people or old friends to be near her at that awful moment. His dinner at the Judeum that night nearly choked him. His acquaintances there were convinced that he had been heavily hit by the sudden fall in Costa Ricas.

Next morning Violet sought an opportunity of speaking with Mr. Dowse in private.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Dowse, but would it be convenient for you to let me leave at the end of the month?”

“To leave altogether?”

“Yes, sir,” she said, humbly.

Mr. Dowse was surprised, and perhaps a trifle offended. He knew he had dealt generously by this girl; and here she was wanting to leave at little more than a week’s notice.

“I hope you have not found the situation disagreeable, Miss Main?” said he, somewhat stiffly.

“Oh, no,” she said; “on the contrary, you have been most indulgent to me.”

“Is it a question of salary?”

“No—certainly not,” she said. “I——”

“Perhaps you have another situation in view?”

“I have not,” she said, earnestly. “I wish to leave England—that is all. I must go. If it would be convenient for you, Mr. Dowse, I would willingly forfeit a month’s salary——”

The moment she had uttered the words, she felt sorry.

“I don’t think, Miss Main,” said he, “that there has been much monetary dispute between us. I am sorry you feel it necessary to leave England; but, if it is so, well, I need scarcely say that we shall not attempt to bind you by any engagement. Perhaps it would be impertinent if I asked you what your plans are?”

“I have none at all,” she said, simply. “I am going to America.”

He looked at her curiously; he began to believe there might be something in the nonsense his son had been talking about this mysterious stranger.

“Well, well, Miss Main,” said he, cheerfully, “you are adventurous; but you have courage. And so you have resolved to leave us? Well, you know, you must come down and bid Mrs. Dowse good-bye.”

This worthy person, having a suspicion that the girl was committing a mistake, was of opinion that nobody could talk her over like Mrs. Dowse.

“What do you say, now? Won’t you change your mind about Christmas?”

“Thank you, sir, I cannot do that. But I shall be very glad to go down and bid Mrs. Dowse good-bye. Would next Saturday be convenient?”

“The day after Christmas?”

“Yes.”

“Certainly it would. You won’t mind coming down to Windsor Station by yourself; as we shall all be down in the country from the Friday to the Monday. We will meet you at the station—that is, if we are not drowned in the floods before then. We are living in the middle of a lake at present.”

And so it was settled that Violet should go down on the Saturday to bid good-bye to her friends at The Laurels. In the meantime she made all her preparations for her departure. She booked her place on board one of the Transatlantic steamers; and got her luggage ready. On the night before Christmas-day she went to Covent Garden and bought some flowers—not

a bouquet of wax-like blooms, but a basket of primroses, and violets, and snowdrops; a vision of spring-time in the dead of winter. Then she went home; and took out a rudely-written piece of paper; and there were tears running down her face like rain as she read the words:—"These flowers are sent to Mr. Drummond from one who received great kindness from him."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"SOUL TO SOUL!"

ALL that Christmas Day, until the afternoon, she spent in her lodgings, sometimes reading, sometimes adding a bit to her packing, sometimes staring out of window into the misty street, where the shops were shut, and the people who passed wore their Sunday clothes. She thought the cold, dismal day would never end.

Her landlady, pitying her forlorn condition, came up and made bold to ask her whether she would not have something extra for her dinner, seeing it was Christmas Day. Miss Main replied that she would be out in the afternoon, and would return for supper, as usual, in the evening. Then Mrs. Roberts called, and frankly invited the girl to go over and have dinner with herself and a small party of guests. Miss Main thanked her friend warmly; but said she had an engagement.

In the afternoon, as it was drawing towards dusk, she put on her shawl and bonnet, and a thick veil, and went out. The gas-lamps were being lighted in the misty twilight. Notwithstanding the heavy rains that had recently fallen, the atmosphere was cold and raw; occasionally the yellow light from the lamps sparkled on the frosty pavements; she vaguely knew the roads would be slippery outside the town, whither she was going.

It seemed strange to her to look at the people who were passing—silent, content, occupied only in thinking of the present moment, of the cold, or the hour, or the condition of the crossing.

They were few in number; the streets were more deserted than on a Sunday; over the closed shops she saw the windows lit up—there, doubtless, were pleasant gatherings of friends, doubtless having a chat and a laugh together before the festivities of the evening began. She walked on—scarcely knowing what to think of all the world around her—until she got an omnibus bound for Victoria-station; and that she entered, finding herself the only passenger.

It was otherwise at the station; for here there were a good many people, mostly young men in evening dress, who were obviously going out to parties in the suburbs. They were in groups—laughing and jesting. She sat in a corner of the dimly-lit waiting-room until it was time for the train to start.

There were two or three friends bound for the same house in the carriage with her. They were joking merrily. They were young Germans, and a trifle boisterous; but she forgave the boys their high spirits—was it not Christmas-time? As she drew near Denmark-Hill station, her heart began to beat more rapidly. She recognised the voice of the porter calling out as the train stopped; she hurried by him—scarcely looking at the wreaths of evergreens hung all around—for she was afraid he might remember her. It was the first Christmas she had omitted to pay a half-crown toll for these pleasant decorations.

Up here the air was keener and clearer; a star or two were faintly visible in the grey overhead; the pavements sparkled with the frost; a great silence lay over the black trees in the gardens. And through these trees and bushes she caught glimpses of glowing windows; here and there a blind lifted or a curtain pushed aside showed her brilliant rooms, and green decorations, and figures—doubtless those of children—dancing; and she heard the sound of merry music. One large gate stood open; she went in a step or two, and stood by the laurel bushes. Was not this "Sir Roger de Coverley"? There were screams of

laughter, and children's voices; through the white curtains she could see that picture of joyousness within. When she turned away, there were tears running down her face. It was her last look at an English Christmas.

At length she got into the Grove; and it was with slow steps, and with a great fear in her heart, that she drew near the house she had been wont to approach with gladness and confidence. She looked all round; there was not a human being visible in the thoroughfare. She ventured to go up as far as the house—on the other side of the road—and stood for a second or two looking at it. What she saw was plain enough—the peaked roofs, the diamond-paned windows, the curious little veranda, and the lamp swinging over the door, under the porch: what she experienced then of the wild anguish of farewell no human being will ever know.

She pictured to herself the group within, in the small dining-room—the sick man, lying on his couch, pretending to be brave and strong so as to help along the simple festivities, perhaps raising a glass in his lean hand and calling on them to drink a glass to their absent friends. She would not be included even in that. But surely they would think of her on this night of all nights in the year, and they would think not unkindly of her, for the sake of old times—.

She could not bear this desperate sobbing; it was like to break her heart. And yet it was hard to tear herself away. There was but a short distance now between her and all that she loved upon earth; soon the great Atlantic would be between them.

"Good-bye—good-bye!" her heart said to them, in its yearning love and agony. "If you knew I was so near, you would come to me—you would ask me to go in—I should not be a stranger . . . Perhaps there is an angel watching over that house, to bring peace to it, and gladness. He knows why I go away. O my dearest friends, good-bye—good-bye for the last time!"

She walked away, her head bent down, her breast heaving with its sobs. She went by those brilliantly-lit windows, whence the sound of music issued, like some mute ghost of misery.

She did not walk far, however; for she had not accomplished the chief part of her mission. After a time, when she had quieted herself somewhat, she began to look around for someone who would become her messenger; but it was some time before she saw a single human being, the thoroughfares were so deserted. At last, however, she heard a small boy approach whistling. She asked him if he would take the basket she held in her hand, with a note, and leave them at a certain door. He looked curiously at her. She said she would give him a shilling, and he at once consented. So she walked back with him to the Grove, entrusted him with the flowers and the folded piece of paper, and then hurried away in the gloom.

James Drummond was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room, propped up by the cushion, and Amy was at the piano, playing to him. His sister entered the room, carrying something, and said—

"What a strange thing! Here is a basket of flowers for you, James—and this bit of paper, which was handed in with them—"

Her face was quite bright. She thought it was a kindly action. She handed him the note, which he opened.

The next moment she was startled by a quick cry. She turned at once, and to her horror saw her brother apparently making a fierce attempt to rise from the couch, while his face was wild and white.

"What is it, James?"

"Sarah, Sarah!" he cried, holding out the paper with a shaking hand, "she is alive! I tell you that Violet is alive! I know—I know—only herself would think of this—it is a message from soul to soul!—Violet—"

He sank back, speechless and exhausted.

"Yes, James," said his sister, soothingly.

ingly. She was dreadfully alarmed by this wild scene; and she jumped to the conclusion that he had lapsed again into delirium. "Perhaps they are from Violet—you must be still now——"

"Woman, woman!" he cried, with still another frantic effort to rise, "don't stand there! Send after her! Send after the messenger! Who brought them?"

"A boy," replied Mrs. Warrener, thoroughly bewildered, for her brother did not appear to be delirious, though he spoke these incoherent words.

"Send after him—quick, quick! Ask him where he got the flowers—and the message——"

She ran at once out into the night. If this were madness, it would soothe him to know she had obeyed him. Or was there some wild possibility—some subtle sense in his over-excited brain——"

Well, she had not far to go; for there was the boy, under the gas-lamp, examining the shilling, and biting it with his teeth, to prove that his good luck was not a delusion.

"Boy," she said hurriedly, "you brought the flowers to our door?"

"Yes, ma'am," he said, suddenly plunging the shilling into his pocket.

"Who gave you them? Where did you get them?"

"The lady gave me them—I met her round the corner——"

"What was she like? A young lady?"

"Yes."

"And tall?"

"Yes, and she wore a thick veil; and I think she was crying."

Mrs. Warrener began to tremble in every limb.

"Which way did she go?"

"That way."

He pointed away down the dusky thoroughfare, which was now silent and empty. Mrs. Warrener went back to the house. Her steps were not very firm; and her face, as she entered the room, was as white as that of her brother, who stared at her with eager, excited eyes.

"Oh, James—is it possible? The boy—the boy says it was a young lady who gave him the flowers—a tall young lady—she was veiled—and he thought she was crying——"

The sick man sank back on the cushion.

"Violet is alive and in London, Sarah," he said faintly. "You must find her . . . Alive! . . . Our Violet here a few minutes ago . . ." And then he murmured to himself, as he turned his head away from the glare of the light, "Oh, Madcap, Madcap, what have you done!"

To be continued.

NATURAL RELIGION.

VIII.

If it be true, as was urged in the last of these papers, that it is an incorrect use of words which identifies religion with Christianity, much more with the clerical Christianity of the day, readers may still be disposed to regard the criticism as merely verbal and unimportant, and may be disappointed at the consequences which have been drawn from it. They may say that in papers promising to treat of religion they do not want to find, on the one hand, much about art, introduced on the ground that, defined in a certain way, religion may be thought to include art; and, on the other hand, little about Christianity, on the ground that Christianity is but one form of religion. If Christianity and religion be not identical, they may say, in that case it is Christianity and not religion that is interesting to us; and if there may be religions that have little connection with morality, and others that are even immoral, such religions we do not desire to hear of, and we think it something like a profanation to class them together with that which has in all minds such solemn associations.

Assuredly it is not intended here to question the pre-eminent importance among religions of those which are moral, and among historical religions of Christianity. Of the three forms of religion which we have distinguished—that of visible things, that of humanity, and that of God regarded as the unity of the universe—the second is far more important than the first, and would be just as much more important than the third, unless we could succeed in recognizing in God something answering to humanity; in which case we shall attain, as in Christianity we do attain, to a higher religion than any of these

three made by compounding two of them. In any case the most indispensable religion to human beings must be that which influences morality, that which tells man what he ought to do and to be. If I have lingered long upon the notion of a religion which is not moral, it has not been on account of the intrinsic importance of such a religion, but on account of the essential importance to my purpose of distinguishing the notion of a religion from that of a morality. For I have undertaken in these papers to exhibit religion as a thing only accidentally and not necessarily connected with the supernatural, and the great difficulty I have to contend with is to make out any middle term between supernaturalism and mere morality. Listen to one who professes what is called liberal Christianity; he distinguishes between the moral part of Christianity and its supernaturalism. The latter he does not care for, and for his own part does not believe, but he recognises that it played an important part in giving currency to the moral truths with which it was associated, and is willing to admit that in this respect it may be useful still to uncultivated minds or half-civilized races. But between the morality and the supernaturalism he perceives no third thing distinct from, yet connected with, both, which he can call religion. In this view then Natural Religion, except as a useless synonym for morality, has no meaning, for religion is actually nothing but morality with supernaturalism super-added to it. It is only morality in the poetical dress in which alone it can gain access to the popular mind. Nor on this point do the orthodox differ from the heterodox. Indeed they reject even more decisively the notion of any religion worthy of the name which does not rest upon supernatural

interventions. In these circumstances any one to whom the notion of religion seems as clearly distinguishable from that of morality on the one hand as from that of a supernatural revelation on the other, is obliged to look about for instances in which it appears completely unconnected with both, and such instances accordingly have been dwelt upon in these papers. But they have only thus been dwelt upon in order that when once the *idée mère* of religion had been brought out we might come back to the questions which all find most important, and inquire how a moral religion differs from a morality, and what third thing there is in Christianity between its moral precepts and its supernaturalism. We have found the essence of religion to consist in that which is otherwise described as the higher life. This higher life is recognised wherever men rise a little above the brutes, and the activity of it is worship, or habitual admiration; accordingly the most universal mark of religion is worship.

This being religion in general, if now we inquire what will be the character of a moral religion, and how it will differ from a mere morality, we may be startled to see how widely distant is the conclusion to which this definition leads us from that commonly accepted. In order to estimate this properly let us consider for a moment the popular view.

Religion, it is popularly said, gives substantial weight to morality by furnishing it with supernatural sanctions. A few elect spirits may have a morality independent of all such sanctions, but in the world at large morality goes along with the belief in rewards and punishments. Just as law would be a mockery if there existed no judges and no prisons, so would morality, which is but an extension of law, be a chimera if there were no heaven and hell and no God, the Judge of all. Now God, heaven, and hell belong to religion and not to morality, and thus religion supplies the basis upon which the morality of societies rests, and that equally whether what it

teaches be regarded as actually true or merely as a useful fiction.

Attempts are sometimes made nowadays to ridicule this view of religion, which makes it do duty for the constable, but it is impossible not to remark in history that religion has done this work over and over again, nay, perhaps almost everywhere in the infancy of society. That which is admired and celebrated by poets as the virtue of a primitive, uncorrupted society, has often been a childish belief that wrongdoing would be followed by a famine or a cattle-plague, and that virtue would be rewarded by victory and rich spoils in the next campaign. The antiquities of law lead us back to a time when law merges in religion and when an execution was a sacrifice. Early legislators endeavoured to control men's actions by inspiring supernatural terrors which probably they fully shared themselves. The first step in those days towards establishing civil order was to find some oath formidable enough to be binding, and thus in those Ten Words, which even sceptical criticism inclines to ascribe to Moses himself, after the declaration of the existence of the national God, care is taken before proceeding further to assert the sanctity of the oath taken in his name. Nor can it for a moment be said that this legal sort of religion is confined to primitive races and periods. It plays a conspicuous part in the history of Christianity itself. The Christian heaven and hell have been used for purposes of police quite as much assuredly as temporal disasters, the sword, the wild beast, and the pestilence were used by the diviners and prophets of the early worships. We cannot help seeing that the very culminating point of Christianity in literature is Dante's poem, which describes the whole universe as divided between the dwelling place of those who are rewarded, those who are corrected, and those who are sacrificed to Divine justice. Locke and Paley in modern times have founded morality upon rewards and punishments; Voltaire himself could not, as his more impetuous followers complained, rid his

mind of the notion of a *Dieu rémunérateur-vengeur*, that God whom, if He did not exist, it would be necessary to invent; and it has appeared to some historians that when at the beginning Christianity made the conquest of Europe, the great alteration made in men's ways of thinking was practically the belief they had acquired in a future state with heaven and hell.

Those then who use the word religion to signify a doctrine of rewards and punishments may certainly urge that they give it an important meaning, and also a meaning which the history of religion goes far to justify. Such a doctrine has over and over again been closely connected with religious systems, and it has exerted, and does to this day exert, the most powerful influence. What is asserted of it is perhaps not much more than the truth, that moral obligation, as distinguished from legal obligation, can hardly be apprehended by uncultivated minds, unless it is presented in this form. Nevertheless, it is clear that this view of religion is totally different from that which regards it in the manner of these papers as habitual admiration; it is clear also that this last definition satisfies, while the other does not, the requirements of some of the most striking practical and historical examples of religion; and finally it is, I think, tolerably clear that all discussions of religious questions must be useless and unprofitable in which instead of adopting one or other of two definitions which differ so widely from one another, religion is left undefined and understood at random now in one sense and now in the other.

It would assuredly be a very unworthy judgment of the prayers and praises which have been offered up in all religions to the object of worship, to consider them simply as devices for obtaining reward or averting punishment. Often enough, no doubt, they are this, but in the highest religion they are not this, and in almost all religions they are much besides this. The Mohammedan in his addresses to Allah seldom asks for anything, but simply strings together

epithets of adoration. St. Francis says expressly "*Jesu, Jesu, amo Te, Nec amo Te quod salvas me.*" And in almost all religions there are features which show that the Deity, if regarded sometimes in the light of a judge, has other characters as well. Such for instance are the various methods by which in different religions the Deity is represented as revealing His will to men, whether visible signs interpreted by the skilled diviner, or dreams, or inspiration miraculous or natural. In other cases where the Deity does appear as dispensing good and evil He is represented as doing so not in the character of a judge who considers solely the merit or demerit of those with whom He deals, but in some other character. Sometimes He protects a particular tribe in which He has an interest against other tribes, sometimes He gives success to this prince purely as a means of punishing that, sometimes instead of punishing the guilty He forgives them, instead of rewarding the just tries them with adversity.

It was Sismondi, I think, who in considering the causes of the demoralisation of the modern Italians, gave a principal weight to the influence of Catholicism, which by encouraging the greatest sinners to hope for salvation if they died at peace with the Church, set, as he considered, religion in direct opposition to morality. If this were so it would be vain to argue that it was not really religion but only a corruption of religion which in this instance showed itself to answer so ill to that definition of religion we are considering, for it is impossible to deny that Christianity, so far from being a simple system of rewards and punishments, is in the first instance a system by which the guilty are admitted to forgiveness, and is to that extent unfit to serve as an influence supplementary to the criminal law. All this is sufficient at any rate to show how different, how much wider, are the aims of religion from those which are attributed to it by those who regard it from the special point of view of the politician or guardian of civil order. In fact, it may be said, that this aspect of religion, though

important enough, is scarcely ever the aspect which shows itself to religious men, but rather that which strikes the cool observer. The politician sees that there is a *theologia civilis* which may be of great political value, but to the religious man himself religion can hardly appear in this light. To him it is all-important for its own sake, and so far from making it subservient to civil order he is prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice civil order to the interests of religion. He, if he were asked for his definition of religion, and clearly it is he who has the best right to an opinion, would undoubtedly give one like that which in these papers *εἰκὴ φύρω*; he would call it a life, a higher life, an activity of something which he feels to be the noblest part of his nature, and these phrases examined and stripped of metaphor seem to mean nothing else but habitual admiration or habitual worshiping contemplation of some object.

The difficulty has often been felt of attributing any religious character to a mere belief in future rewards and punishments. It has been remarked that the virtue which is propped up by such a system is a dead virtue and scarcely deserves to be called virtue at all, for that all virtue involves something of self-sacrifice, something of devotion, whereas the doctrine of future punishments literally understood reduces it to a matter of selfish calculation. As to rewards we cannot fail to observe that even the analogy of human institutions fails us here. States punish crime, but they do not reward virtue except in rare and peculiar cases in which, in fact, what is called reward is not so much a token of judicial approbation as an expression of public gratitude; and the attempt to arrange a scale of rewards for virtue by Legions of Honour and the like inventions has usually led to questionable results.

Such difficulties occur to us when we try to regard the doctrine of rewards and punishments as the essential part of religion, which view, nevertheless, because it is the view most natural to politicians, has become the popular one. It is another question whether

it is not a part, even an important and necessary part, of religion, whether not civil order but religion itself would not suffer fatally if it were given up. To think of God as unjust would have other consequences besides that of sapping morality and undermining society. The impunity promised to criminals by such a doctrine would not be so mischievous as the degradation of religion itself in its higher sense of worship. God, even thought of as not just, would remain glorious, the object of a rapt intellectual worship. All the more paralysing, all the more maddening would be the mixture of horror with admiration in our meditations on Him. This may be thought a sentimental way of speaking by those who have persuaded themselves that after all by the showing of science God is not just, and who from some illusion which is a survival of the very optimism they reject, cannot bring themselves to think that what is the reality may nevertheless be unendurable. But the old opinion of Socrates and Aurelius that life is not worth having if God is not just, is echoed by our latest writer on morals, who speaks of such a doctrine as reducing the cosmos of the moral world to chaos; and even if not fatal to human life itself such a doctrine is fatal to religion. For it introduces dismay and despair and a germ of madness into the very heart of our thinking, and religion does not seem possible except upon a basis of inward serenity.

Thus on the one hand it appears that a belief in the justice of God is necessary to religion itself; but on the other hand the notion that religion is, in the first instance, such a belief furnishing a prop to morality appears a kind of afterthought taken up by politicians, the mistaking of a secondary effect of religion for its original object and *raison d'être*. The true relation between religion and morality is not this but another. Morality does not require supernatural sanctions to make it authoritative. We should consider it in these days a mark of low cultivation, if any one avowed that he only kept his engagements from

fear of hell-fire. It is with a start of surprise at the change of thought which has taken place in little more than a century that we read Benjamin Franklin's avowal, that the reason why he was guilty in his youth of several base and dishonourable actions,—such as breaking a written engagement made to his brother because he knew that it could not be produced against him, forgetting his engagement to his betrothed as soon as he left her neighbourhood, &c.—was simply that he had become a sceptic. We are startled to observe that virtue apart from heaven and hell is unintelligible to his mind, and the example teaches us to realise what is now half forgotten, how potent the *theologia civilis* once was, and that not merely among politicians but in the puritanic communities which had given Franklin his education.

But if we abandon this view of the true connection between religion and morality, are we, therefore, to identify them, and regard them as merely different names for the same thing? This, as I have remarked, is the tendency of those who take what are called advanced views. Morality, they think, is the kernel, religion the shell. In other words, religion is the dress of mythology and legend, in which morality comes dressed up. Mythology and legend are, of course, not to be regarded as true; but, on the other hand, to attempt an earnest refutation of them would expose us to the irony of Plato, and even to despise them would be a proof of a common way of thinking. They are to be prized, and carefully retained as a fund of poetical imagery by which the morality they contain may be commended to the popular, the immature—nay, in hours of dulness, even to the maturest mind. But such phrases, even when most skilfully employed, convey, after all, the notion that the only real thing is morality, and that if the very name of religion were discarded, nothing would be lost but a word.

It is now, therefore, time to apply that conception of religion as regulated

admiration, which we have been developing, to the moral department of things, and see whether it will not serve to give definiteness to phrases which at present seem so vague. We may, I think, come to see that religion thus defined is a prop, a most necessary prop, to morality, but in quite another way than the politician supposes. We may understand that the morality which is founded on free admiration is vital and progressive; but that which is not so founded is torpid and conventional.

As we have all along represented art as having its root in religion, and as being of kin to the other manifestations of religion which, as being much more solemn and momentous, have in common parlance confined the name of religion to themselves, it is natural that we should find the history of art illustrating the history of religion at every step. The difference between what is conventional and what is vital can be studied in art just as well as in morals, and it is rather by comparing the way in which the contrast displays itself in both departments than by considering it in each alone that we are likely to ascertain most precisely in what the contrast consists.

Everyone knows, then, how subtle, and yet how all-important in works of art is genuine artistic quality. In every art the distinction is felt—and the critic has scarcely anything to do but to point it out—between work that is merely clever or brilliant and work that is really artistic. The difference, every earnest critic protests, is like that between light and darkness, almost like that between right and wrong. It is the "one thing needful," this genuineness; work in which it is found has value; other work has no right to exist, and had better be destroyed. A distinction which affects every single performance of art, naturally appears with the utmost prominence in the history of art. Whole schools, whole periods are found to have lost the inestimable secret, and therefore to have left nothing behind that has permanent value; other schools and

periods, in spite of great faults, are nevertheless found to possess the secret. At times not only is the secret lost, but the very tradition of it is lost too; it is denied that such a secret exists; and the question is argued with great warmth in the critical world.

In such a controversy the watchword of one side is "rules;" that of the other is "nature," or "genius," or "inspiration." Yet those who withstand the appeal to rules, and deny the authority of the rules cited against them do not, when they are wise, deny that in good works of art certain fixed rules will be found to be observed. But they maintain that rules are liable to continual change, and that only principles are invariable, or, in other words, that genius makes its own rules; or, again, that the only rule is to follow nature. When the causes of this difference of view are examined, it is found that the party of rules take altogether a less exalted view of art than their opponents, that they think of art as a sort of game of skill which is in itself unimportant, but yet which it is idle to profess to play at unless you observe the rules, while the others set no bounds to their estimate of its dignity, and habitually speak of the pursuit of it as a religion, and of skill in it as priesthood or inspiration. This controversy in art is so fundamental that when the issue is fairly tried, the world is convulsed with it almost as by religious debate. In the eighteenth century it spread through all Europe, and filled decades with its slow progression by the side of the great attack on Christianity. The same man took the lead in both; Voltaire was as much bent on maintaining the dramatic unities and the *bienséances* of literature as he was bent on destroying the Church. In the two controversies he had very opposite fortune. While the Church and the ecclesiastical Christianity of the time seemed almost helpless under his assaults, he saw his artistic opponents constantly gaining upon him. The renown of Shakespeare loomed nearer and nearer, and before he died the word "genius" had been passed in Germany,

and "rules" and "unities" had become names of ridicule. Nor did the tide turn. Fifty years after Voltaire's death the opposite principles prevailed in his own country, and it is now felt to be impossible to revive with any real success the names of the poets, so illustrious a century ago, who wrote under the system of rules. "A dispassionate judge," said Frederic then, "will acknowledge that the *Henriade* is superior to the poems of Homer;" but Homer is now higher than ever, while the *Henriade* is almost as dead as those poems of antiquity which have not come down to us.

Let us turn, now, from what are called the fine arts, from the arts which are concerned with poetry, painting, &c., to life and action, in other words to the art which deals with human conduct. Do we not find the same debate raging here too? nay, do we not find the same debate equally prominent in the history of the subject? Are there not in the department of morals also rules, unities, *bienséances*, and a party which can see nothing beyond? Is there not here, too, a genius party, which speaks sometimes of "nature," sometimes of "the heart," and which is distinguished from the other party by a profession of greater earnestness or solemnity in their view of the subject, and by habitually using the word "religion," and with it the whole vocabulary of religion? Only whereas in the case of art the phrases of religion are commonly supposed to be not quite strictly used, but rather with some degree of metaphor, the genius-school in morals use those phrases in the plainest and most literal sense. If, then, we correct this notion in the manner explained before, and say that religion, as spoken of in art, is to be literally understood, but that it refers to a secondary form of religion, viz., what has been called the Higher Paganism, it will be evident in a moment that another view of the relation of religion to morality, and a view consistent with our definition of religion, may be taken, and also that it is a view which gives religion an importance quite as great as any that can be

claimed for the *theologia civilis* above described.

According to this view there are two sorts of morality which differ from each other in the same way, as, for example, Addison's *Cato* differs from *King Lear*; only that the difference in the former case is as much more momentous than in the latter case, as morals are more important than poetry. The merit of *Cato* consists mainly in the observance of certain rules and decencies—rules of approved critics, decencies of the drawing-room; the merit of *Lear* is a prodigious activity of imaginative and sympathetic contemplation. Poetry then, it seems, may be of two totally different kinds; it may be produced in a comparatively languid state of the faculties by almost automatic repetition of what has been written by others; it may also appear with strangely new characteristics and only resembling what has been produced before so far as it is poetry, through an intense observation and assimilation of something in nature. To the eye of the true critic the difference between the two sorts is infinite; the latter sort he calls real and precious, the former he passes by with indifference; and yet both are called poetry, both have excited admiration, nay, it was, in this case, the hollow production which was hailed with the loudest approval.

It is just the same with conduct or morality as it is with art. Life may be conducted according to rules similar to the unities of the drama; it may also be conducted on the method of free inspiration, in which case also rules will be observed; but the rules will be different, less stereotyped, adapting themselves more readily to new circumstances, and moreover they will be observed instinctively and not felt as a constraint. And though this latter method may easily be abused, though the inspiration may in particular cases be feigned or forced, though individuals may pervert the method to a loose antinomianism in morals, as in art it has often been made the excuse of formlessness or extravagance; yet it

remains the true method, the only one which keeps morality alive and prevents it from becoming a prim convention—the only system, in short, under which moral Shakespeares can flourish.

But in what precisely does the difference between the two methods consist? In this, I reply; that in the one morality is founded on religion, and in the other not. The definition which has been given of religion enables us to express the difference in these simple terms, and we can, at the same time, describe the corresponding difference in art in corresponding language, and so bring together under one general formula phenomena of which all must instinctively feel that they are of the same kind. For if religion be that higher life of man which is sustained by admiration, if its essence be worship or some kind of enthusiastic contemplation seeking for expression in outward acts, then we shall say of morality that it is founded on religion if it arise out of enthusiastic contemplation; and in like manner we shall call art religious, if it have a similar origin. Now the point of close resemblance between the genius school in art and the anti-legal school in morals is precisely this, that both consist of worshippers, both elevate their minds by habitual admiration. Enough has been said of the worship which lies at the root of genuine art. It is not in empty metaphor that the true artist affects so much the language of religion. The loving devotion with which he traces the forms of nature has all the character, and is attended by all the emotions, of religion; and, historically, this devotion has belonged to a visible religious system which had for centuries its temples and its ceremonies, and commanded its thousands of votaries, for art disengaged itself gradually from the religion of Greece; and when the true artist stands out in contrast to the mere craftsman who makes works of art by rule, he is distinguished by nothing so plainly as by the religious feeling which he mingles with his artistic industry. But let us now consider the

religion that lies also at the root of all free morality.

There is, plainly enough, a morality that has no religion at the bottom of it. The morality that simply keeps on the windy side of the law rests on nothing but the plainest common sense. The morality that aims at satisfying the expectation of society, that observes the point of honour of a class, that avoids giving matter for scandal—this again wants no religion. It saves trouble to be as good as your neighbours; every really shrewd person will be moral in this sense of the word; nay, perhaps true prudence would require a man to be in one or two small matters more particular than his neighbours. But with this morality the higher life is not in any way concerned; but only that lower life whose objects are wealth, estimation, prosperity. The higher life begins when something is worshipped, when some object of enthusiastic contemplation is before the soul. When morality rises immediately out of this it is religious, and then only has it real vitality. The fighting of a Czerny George differs from that of a mercenary in this, that the hero has his country present to his mind and his heroic actions are of the nature of sacrifices offered to that object of his religion. And like martial heroism, so every virtue may take two shapes, the one lower and the other higher; for every virtue may spring from calculation, and on the other hand every act of virtue may be a religious act arising out of some worship or devotion of the soul.

But now it is not every religion that prompts to virtuous action, for, as we have said so often, one kind of religion bears fruit in works of art. As virtue can only show itself in our relations to our fellow-men, the religion that leads to virtue must be a religion that worships men. If in God Himself we did not believe qualities analogous to the human to exist, the worship of Him would not lead to virtue; the worship of God not as we believe Him, but as we see Him in nature, would be likely, taken by itself, to lead to pitiless fanaticism.

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Thus it is, that of all the great historical religions of the world the two which have been in the most marked degree moral, viz., Christianity and Buddhism, agree in this, that both centre in the worship of a Man. The latter, indeed, may be said to begin and end in this worship, for in that system the gods themselves are represented as altogether inferior to the Buddha. In Christianity it is not so; there the Man who is worshipped is regarded as revealing the invisible God, and thus the worship of the Eternal Power in nature is rendered, what of itself it would not be, moral. But we quote these historical religions only by way of illustration; we speak here of religion rather than of religions, and what we would maintain is not merely that the worship of a human ideal may produce virtue, but that all virtue which is genuine and vital springs out of the worship of Man in some form. Not only in the person of Christ, or in the lives of Christians; but under other forms, wherever the higher morality shows itself, Humanity is worshipped. It is worshipped under the form of country, or of ancestors, or of heroes, or great men, or saints, or virgins, or in individual lives, under the form of a friend, or mother, or wife, or any object of admiration, who, once seizing the heart, made all humanity seem sacred, and turned all dealings with men into a religious service. But it is worshipped most of all when passing by an act of faith beyond all that we can know, we attribute all the perfections of ideal humanity to the Power that made and sustains the universe.

Thus we arrive at a new view of the relation between religion and morality quite different from that commonly taken, and yet, it will be found, often confused with and mistaken for it. Let us put the two views side by side.

The one says that religion supplies the greatest sanctions to morality by revealing the rewards and punishments of a future state meted out by omniscient wisdom and justice.

The other says that religion makes

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morality vital, energetic and progressive, by creating a *moral spirit*, and that it does this by setting up for admiration or worship ideals of human excellence.

Now these two views agree to a certain extent, and may therefore easily be confused together. For according to both views religion is a popular thing, made for the multitude, and not merely for a few philosophers. The rules and prohibitions of morality, taken by themselves, are cold and ineffective; but the question of heaven and hell all can understand, and in like manner all can be made to understand virtue when it is put before them, living and lovely, as an object of worship. Those who watch the great attempt now making to set up a philosophic creed have often occasion to observe that the creed grows less and less influential in proportion as it becomes more philosophic, and that the only practical result of the effort, when we consider the mass of mankind, is to bring Catholicism back into fashion. But in explaining to themselves the secret of the charm of Catholicism these observers oscillate between different views. "Catholicism is definite, has real dogmas from which it does not flinch; it exalts and satisfies the soul, which the cold and prosaic Protestant or, still more, sceptical systems, leave untouched." This is the language used, but it confuses together two perfectly distinct advantages which Catholicism happens to unite. Catholicism is powerful no doubt because it does not explain away heaven and hell; but its warmth, its poetical charm, have nothing to do with the inflexibility of its dogmas. These are owing to something else. They are the reward of the firmness with which it clings to the true idea of a religion, basing its moral discipline upon true worship, enthusiastic contemplation joined with intimate communion, of ideals of saintly humanity.

But I pass now from the consideration of religion as it ought to be according to the strict definition of the word to the question which most feel so much more interesting, of religion as it has historically been. Christianity itself, to which

of the two classes of religion does it more properly belong? Is it a religion of worship, or a religion of rewards and punishments?

Catholicism, I have just said, is both together, and both in a very high degree; this is the secret of its ascendancy, because, with the one aspect, it attracts tender and poetical spirits, and with the other it overawes rude ones. And such in the main was the religion of Dante; the religion of Augustine was not very different. But after all the Christianity of the Roman Empire is not necessarily the same as the Christianity which formed itself at the beginning in Palestine. The few creeds which have had the force to subdue foreign races have done so commonly at the expense of modifying their own character. The Christianity of Europe is one thing; the Christianity described in the Bible is another. They differ, perhaps, almost as much as the religion of Thibet and Mongolia differs from that which is called by the same name in Ceylon.

Mr. Mill speaks with some sarcasm of those who fancy the Bible is all one book. It is a great mistake to do so; but it is perhaps a still greater mistake to think that it is *not* one book, or that it has no unity. The writings of which it is composed, allowing a few exceptions, agree together and differ from other books in certain characteristics. Certain large matters are always in question, and the action moves forward with a slow evolution, like the *dénouement* of a play, through a thousand years of history. The Founder of the Christian Church believed His work to be the completion of the long history of His race, and therefore if we grasp successfully the kernel of the Bible, if we manage to distinguish that with which the Bible from first to last is principally concerned, we shall stand a good chance of distinguishing that which is the substance of Christianity, according to the original intention of its Founder.

Now what in the main is the subject of the Bible? Nine people out of ten, reading it with all the prepossession of

later Christianity, would say, it is the book of heaven and hell, the book which teaches the littleness of this life and the greatness of the life to come. Other books are secular, they tell us about the visible world and our temporal life; the Bible tells us of the other world and of an eternal life. But is this really the account of the Bible that would be given by any one who read it for the first time, and with an unprejudiced mind?

Let us consider. The Bible then contains the history of a tribe that grew into a nation, of its conquest of a particular country, of the institutions that it created for itself, and of its fortunes through several centuries. Through all these centuries we hear nothing of heaven and hell. A divine revelation is said to be given to this nation; but it is a revelation which is silent about a future state. The conspicuous characters of many generations pass before us; to all appearance they do not differ from similar characters in other nations in looking forward more to a state of existence after death. Their hopes are for their descendants, for the future of their country, rather than for themselves; occasionally they speak as if they actually believed in nothing after death. Then we pass from the historical to the religious writings of this race, the hymns of their temple, the discourses of their prophets. Here, too, for a long time we meet with no clear references to a future state. The imagination of this people apparently does not care to deal with the mysteries of another life. Such pictures of the state of the dead and the rewards and punishments meted out to them as we find in Homer, Plato, Virgil, are entirely absent from the literature of the Hebrews. Not indeed that the belief in rewards and punishments is wanting. The religion of the Bible in its primitive form is like most primitive religions, a *theologia civilis*; nay, it continues so a long time, and no fuller statement of such a civil religion than the Book of Deuteronomy can anywhere be found. But it is to be

observed in the first place that the rewards and punishments contemplated are all purely temporal; and in the next place we remark that as we advance this view of religion instead of being more and more clearly announced in the Bible, becomes obscured, and at length seems to be in a manner abandoned. It is admitted that the bad prosper at times, and that the good at times suffer, whether it be for trial of their virtue or to atone for the sins of others.

Later in the book the notion of a future state begins to appear; it creeps in silently, and seems to subsist for a time in the state of an admissible speculation; then in the New Testament it prevails and becomes part of the teaching of the book. But to the end of the Bible there are to be found no heaven and hell such as are put before us in Dante; the writers do not fix their attention as he does upon a future state. A few mysterious affirmations about it suffice them. We find no descriptions, no concentration of the prophetic imagination upon the state of the dead. This is the more to be noted because it is characteristic of the Bible writers both in the New and Old Testaments, that they occupy themselves so much with the future. The future is their study, but *not*—this is almost as true of the New Testament as of the Old—not the future after death. It is a kind of political future that absorbs them, the fall of kingdoms and tyrants, of Babylon, Epiphanes, Nero, and the Roman Empire, the future of Jerusalem, the expected return of Christ to reign upon the earth.

The popular notion, then, which makes the Bible a sort of Book of the Dead destroys its unity. Isolated passages in the New Testament may be quoted to support it; but the theory is not one which brings together the earlier and later books of the Bible, so as to make them seem parts of the same whole. Only by desperate shifts of interpretation can the Old Testament, on this theory, be made to lead up to the New. To those who think the present life a dream, and the future

life alone worth consideration, the Old Testament prophets, wrapped up in their Jerusalem and its future, and careless to all appearance of their own future, can scarcely seem edifying writers, and their religion must seem not merely immature, but founded on a radically wrong principle.

Thus, if religion be made to turn entirely upon a future life, the Bible is not the religious book *par excellence* it is commonly supposed to be. On the other hand, if we take the other view of religion which has been presented in this paper, we shall find that of *this* religion the Bible is the text-book as no other book is or can be. Do we want an idea which shall give unity to the Bible, which shall make Old Testament and New and the separate writings composing both seem—in the main and roughly, for more is not to be expected—to belong together and to make up a great whole? Just as clearly as the idea of a future life is not this, the idea of morality inspired and vivified by religion in the manner above described is. It is not the essential character of the Bible itself, but the prepossession of most of its readers and their invincible curiosity about the supernatural that makes it seem in the first instance a book about the invisible world; the idea that pervades it most from first to last is one which belongs altogether to practical life, and which must seem just as important to the sceptic as to the most believing supernaturalist; it is the idea summed up in an antithesis which takes many forms, the antithesis of letter and spirit, law and grace, works and faith.

When we consider human action, whether theoretically or historically, we are always brought back to this fundamental antithesis. Human action is either mechanical or vital, either automatic or rational. Either it follows custom or reason, either it is guided by rules or by inspiration. In morals as in poetry you must be of the school either of Racine or of Shakespeare. Either you must sedulously observe a number of regulations you do not hope to under-

stand, or you must move freely towards an end you passionately conceive, at times making new rules for yourself, at times rejecting old ones, and allowing to convention only a kind of provisional or presumptive validity. The greatness of the Bible, its title to be called the Book *par excellence* lies in this, that it grasps firmly this fundamental antithesis, expounds and illustrates it exhaustively through a history of a thousand years, and leaves it in the act of revolutionising the world. It thus becomes the unique Epic of Human Action, the Book of Dead and Living Morality.

We associate this controversy of works and faith principally with the name of St. Paul and that last chapter of the Biblical history in which a local creed was generalised, so as to be capable of becoming the religion of the Roman Empire. But in reality the fifth act of the drama does not differ from the earlier acts, for the drama is one. That earlier rebellion against the authority of Scribes and Pharisees was, from our point of view, another aspect of the same controversy. It was precisely parallel to those transitions in literature or art when the commentatorial spirit is renounced, when free inspiration moves again, the yoke of authority is broken, and new leaders assert their equality or superiority to the most venerated names of the past. The same debate pervades the Old Testament as completely as the New. Everything there centres in the Law, everything turns on the way in which it is to be regarded. Is it final? Is it capable of development? Is it to be obeyed blindly, superstitiously? Or is it possible to enter into its spirit and render a liberal obedience to it? Nor is the controversy handled in a one-sided or fanatical spirit. It is recognised not only that the stereotyped letter is valuable, not only that it is to be protected at any sacrifice against foreign admixtures, and guarded with watchful zeal against neglect, but it is also admitted, even by the leading champions of freedom, that there is a period or stage of national life when law is predominant, that the

law is a pedagogue, and the like. And thus the transition, in which Ezra takes the lead, is in favour of the most punctilious legality, and a long period follows, in which the commentatorial spirit reigns, and the stream of inspiration runs shallower, until it dries up altogether.

When a great number of treatises in different styles and of different periods are presented to a reader as one book, nothing is more natural than that he should miss the clue to such a book, and find it difficult to distinguish what is episodical or accidental in it from what belongs to the main subject. Thus some readers of the Bible fix, as we have said, upon its revelations of a future state, and overlook the striking silence about a future state which most of the Biblical books preserve; others fix upon its miracles, though it is easy to quote from the New Testament passages in which the evidence of miracles is spoken of slightly. Sceptics come and deny that the Bible has any unity at all, and no doubt we cannot without assuming a miracle think to discover in the Bible the same degree of unity as in a play of Shakespeare's. Still, even the Greek literature, taken as a whole, has a certain unity, and it was to be expected that the classics of the Jews, a nation so remarkable for the tenacity and continuity of their national life, should show a good deal more. What we find, if we read without prepossession, is precisely what we should expect. We find a history of the nation much more intense and ideal than other histories, in which therefore the fundamental lesson of history is more successfully brought out, in which it is shown how law disciplines those who are subject to it, until, after a long course of generations, there springs up a morality which is free, active, and energetic, because it is founded upon the religion of ideal humanity.

This unity of the Bible has nothing miraculous about it; on the other hand, it is entirely invulnerable by sceptical criticism. Considered as a collection of oracles the Bible is damaged by criticism;

but this cannot matter much to those who believe that the express object of the Bible is to emancipate us from the dominion of oracles. The influence of the Greek and Latin classics is not now less than it was, perhaps it is even greater; and yet criticism has cancelled some centuries of the history of Greece and Rome as untrustworthy, and has denied the personality of Homer, while the authority of Aristotle has been long since renounced in the schools and in the theatre, new sciences and literatures have sprung up, and the last traces of the Roman Empire have disappeared from the systems of Europe. Just as indestructible by criticism or changes of opinion will the influence of the Bible, considered as a collection of classical books, prove; and that which is peculiar to it, and has caused it to be spoken of as one book rather than many, viz., the unity reigning through a work upon which so many generations laboured, gives it a vastness beyond comparison, so that the greatest work of individual literary genius shows by the side of it like some building of human hands beside the Peak of Teneriffe.

It stands there as a fragment, for if the struggle between two sorts of morality which it records be really so fundamental and universal wherever human beings pretend to any morality as we have represented it, evidently the record ought to be continued so as to embrace modern times. It ought to be related how the free morality, after being successfully revealed to the world, became the religion of races which were so far from being ripe for it, that they were but just ready for the legal stage; and how of necessity a new system of Christian legalism arose which reigned for centuries; how, after disciplining a barbarian world, this system, so powerful, though so radically self-contradictory, gave way, and the language of St. Paul about faith and liberty began to be intelligible again; how the tyranny of a church gave place to the less intolerable tyranny of a book, while the nations were preparing themselves to take up once again the freedom of those

who live not by rules but by religion, the religion of ideal humanity. It ought to be related also how, as we have before pointed out, the other forms of religion, too much kept down by the reigning religion of humanity, have asserted themselves—the Higher Paganism in the *Renaissance*, the religion of Deity in philosophy and science.

The historical course of things is never more than a rough approximation to what philosophers think ought to be, nor yet probably, though that is a very different thing, to what really ought to be. The Bible may not be in every particular such a book as a benevolent philosopher would write for a universal

text-book of morality, though one may be allowed to suspect that it is infinitely better; ecclesiastical history may be so deeply disappointing, that we may be tempted to exclaim with Goethe, "*Mischmasch von Irrthum und von Gewalt!*" But if it appears that the morality of mankind, to be vigorous, must rest upon religion or the free worship of moral ideals, the world has not been altogether ill-guided in consecrating the book which is devoted to teaching this very doctrine, nor in organising, however imperfectly, those religious systems in which ideals of humanity are worshipped.

To be continued.

THE ITALIAN DRAMA.

III

THE MELODRAMA IN ITALY DURING
THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHT-
EENTH CENTURIES — APOSTOLO
ZENO—METASTASIO.

A.D. 1600—1782.

"Il faut aller à ce palais magique
Où les beaux vers, la danse, la musique,
L'art de tromper les yeux par les couleurs,
L'art plus heureux de séduire les cœurs
De cent plaisirs font un plaisir unique."

TIRABOSCHI, in the preface to his eighth volume, bids us observe that whereas the literature of Italy during the sixteenth century occupies three volumes of his history, that of the succeeding age is easily comprised in one. Nor does he attempt to disguise that whatever lustre this period may derive from grave scientific discoveries, it is rightly marked as an age of decadence in literature.

This remark seems particularly applicable to the drama of Italy, which, during this century, can stand no comparison with that of France, then carried to the zenith of its fame by Corneille, Racine, and Molière. Still, while we admit this, it must be remembered that in the preceding age Italian tragedy and comedy had both attained to a certain degree of merit before such compositions were even known by name in France.

Although the general style of the Italian Dramatic School of the seventeenth century is much to be deplored, Tiraboschi considers that there are some few exceptions to the rule which are worthy of passing notice. Several tragedies published by the Bolognese Melchior Zoppio (died 1634), who was the founder of the Accademia de' Gelati in Bologna:—the *Tomiri* of Angelo Ingegneri, though it has more claim to our sympathy as the composition of the friend who preserved Tasso's works from destruction than on account of its own individual merit; the sacred

Rappresentazione of *Adamo* by Andreini,¹ which is supposed to have suggested some of the most sublime ideas of *Paradise Lost*—the envy of Satan on beholding man's happiness in Paradise (book v.), the battle of the angels against Lucifer (vi.), the council of demons (*ibid.*): all these are to be found in the *Adamo*, whence it would seem that Milton has taken the gold, leaving behind the dross which disfigures the Italian tragedy. Two other rather obscure and unknown Italian, Rappresentazioni, *La Scena tragica d'Adamo e d'Eva*, by Troilo Benacense, and the *Angeleida* of Erasmo di Valvasore, are said to have also furnished Milton with some of those descriptive figures so unrivalled in their richness, which adorn the *Paradise Lost*.² The Italian critics bestow some approbation on the *Tancredi* of Rodolfo Campeggi (published 1614), and the *Solimano* of Prospero Bonarelli, a member of the Accademia degli Umoristi, which, like the more ancient Siennese institutions, was originally founded for the purpose of promoting the comic drama. Some fifty sacred and profane dramas by the Sicilian Ortensio Scamaccia (died 1648) came next in order, while Sarpi's rival historian of the Council of Trent, the Cardinal Pallavicino found relaxation from his graver labours in writing a tragedy called *Ermengildo*. The list shall be completed by four tragedies, the works of Cardinal Giovanni Delfino—of which the first, *La Cleopatra*, was considered worthy of a place in the *Teatro Italiano*—and by the *Aristodemo* of Carlo de' Dottori, represented in Paris, 1657, by a celebrated actor, "Pietro Cotta, detto Clelio" with

¹ Giovanbattista Andreini, born 1578, published his *Adamo* at Milan, 1613, and dedicated it to Maria de' Medici.

² See Walker's *Hist. Memoir of Italian Tragedy*, pp. 160-175.

the intention of restoring the Italian tragedy to the high position which it had once occupied. But it was a vain effort, and still less can be said for the comedies of this century, which had degenerated into the lowest kind of buffoonery, without any attempt at unity of plot or delineation of character, and were universally bad, with the exceptions of *La Tancia* and *La Fiera*, two comedies by Michelangelo Buonarroti, a great-nephew of the famous sculptor.

As to the pastorals, *La Filla di Sciro*, by Guidobaldo della Rovere, is considered the only specimen of the seventeenth century which can bear any comparison with the *Aminta* and the *Pastor Fido*, those great original models of this order of drama. Although if one of these, the *Pastor Fido*, is open to censure on the score of its occasionally artificial and affected style, the *Filla di Sciro* has copied this defect to an excess in accordance with the prevailing bad taste of the seventeenth century.

The deterioration of the drama during this period must in a great measure be ascribed to the predominant popularity of the melodrama, which had the effect of almost excluding for the time every other kind of dramatic representation from the stage. But this unbounded popularity, far from promoting the advance and improvement of the new discovery was so highly prejudicial to it as almost to cause its total and immediate destruction.

The melodrama very early lost the charm with which it had been invested by the graceful poetry of Rinuccini and the careful musical compositions of Caccini, Peri, and Mei. In the hands even of their immediate successors, these intellectual enjoyments were exchanged for the mere wonder excitable by startling scenical decorations, assisted by an almost stupendous apparatus of machinery.

If the authors who immediately succeeded Rinuccini had been content to follow in his steps, and like him had carefully weighed how far the effect of the melodrama upon the imagination might safely be assisted by this kind of

scenic effect, they would have placed some check on their inventive faculties, and would thus have established a new kind of drama, pleasing to the fancy, without being at variance either with sound judgment or common sense.

But as it was, everything was sacrificed to the wonderful *mise-en-scène*.

The subjects were chosen for representation merely with this object in view. On this account they were chiefly taken from two sources—the mythology of the ancients and the romantic and legendary lore of the Middle Ages. In this last especially an inexhaustible store of scenery was to be found suggested by the enchanted palaces and forests, the tournaments, feats of arms, and manifold adventures of the knight-errant; while, of *dramatis personæ*, there was equal plenty in the magicians, giants, and dwarfs, fair maidens, and gallant knights and squires ever ready to succour "Beauty brought to unworthy wretchedness through Envy's snares or Fortune's freaks unkind."

It was an easy step to transport into the drama

"Le donne, i cavalieri, l'armi, gli amori,
La cortesia, l'audaci imprese,"

permanently engrafted into the literature of Italy by the immortal poems of Ariosto and Tasso, and there to invest them with all the pomp of splendid decoration and scenery which naturally appertains to them. The music which had now become inseparably connected with the poetry of these dramatic representations, combined to enhance the effect. But at first it was difficult to make the combination of the two arts assume either a natural or plausible appearance before the unaccustomed eyes of the audience.

Therefore the authors in choosing their arguments, either from the realms of fancy or mythology, purposely sought to place as wide a difference as possible between the spectators and the circumstances of the action of their drama, so that the improbability of the musical dialogue might not so conspicuously challenge the attention. Thus if it was

contrary to nature that the heroes and heroines should sing their parts instead of speaking them, they transformed their men and women into gods and goddesses; if the earth was an unlikely place for such conversations in music, they laid their scenes in the Elysium or Hades of mythology. Abandoning as hopeless the chance of awakening the interest of their audience by depicting character and passion, they sought only to gratify their eyes and ears, and despairing of satisfying their reason, appealed instead to their imagination.

But if the advance of poetry and music was thus thwarted and hindered by the imperative necessity of producing a drama which must depend for its success on the magnificence of its scenic effects, painting and architecture were in the highest request. The art of perspective, so indispensable to create the space and distance necessary to keep up the illusion of the scenery, was carefully cultivated in the various schools of painting in Italy, while architecture had ample space for its development in theatres worthy of Ancient Rome. To cite only two examples: The theatre at Piazzola, a small town ten miles from Padua, erected by Marco Contarini, was particularly famous for its capacious stage. In 1680 and 1681 there were representations which brought upon the scene triumphal cars, drawn by magnificent horses, 100 Amazons, and 100 Moors, hunts and tournaments, and every gorgeous spectacle of the kind. The theatre of Parma, built by the Duke Ranuccio Farnese, is perhaps the most conspicuous example of all. It was designed in the year 1618-19 by Giambattista Aleotti from an ancient model, and not only the general plan, but all the details were carefully fashioned from the classical accounts of the Greek and Roman theatres. It was afterwards enlarged by Bentivoglio, till in the year 1690, on the occasion of the festivities given for the marriage of Odoardo Farnese, it was calculated to contain 14,000 spectators. To this day, it is said, may be seen the syphons and conduits by means of which water,

sufficient to float barks of a considerable size, was turned on the scene. On another occasion horses were made to perform military evolutions in such numbers that they appeared to represent a real army. Nevertheless the acoustics of this vast building are said to have been so perfectly managed that the ordinary tones of conversation could be heard as distinctly at the opposite end of the theatre as if shouted at the top of the voice.

Venice was especially distinguished among the cities of Italy by the magnificence of her musical and dramatic feasts, which prevailed during carnival, and attracted crowds of strangers to the city. One of these, *La Divisione del Mondo*, represented, 1675, by Giulio Cesare Corradi in the theatre of S. Salvatore, is a striking example of this kind of drama. Another, the *Pastore d'Anfiso*, displayed the Palace of the Sun, built in perfect architectural proportions, of crystals of dazzling brilliancy. A third, *Il Dario*, by Francesco Beverini, portrayed various striking scenes in the life of the Eastern monarch, his camp with elephants carrying towers filled with armed soldiers, the palace and terrace at Babylon, the pavilion of the king, the mausoleum of Ninus, and numerous cavalry and infantry drawn up in battle array. The *Glorie di Firenze* and the splendours of *Il Cielo di Cristallo* smiled on the nuptials of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, while the royal palace at Turin was turned into a theatre to represent with due effect the various scenes of the double drama of *Il Vascello della Felicità e l'Avianna*.

It was indeed no wonder that an invention which combined the arts of poetry, music, painting, and architecture should have had such universal success and should have spread with marvellous rapidity over all the countries of Europe. France, Spain, England, Germany, and Russia lost no time in making this new and wonderful discovery their own.

But this paper can only afford to sketch, and that very slightly, its rise and progress in Italy.

The "melodrama," even in the debased form which it assumed during this century, was not only pleasing to the Italians on account of its novelty and varied charms, but also because it filled the total dramatic void of this period. The *Teatro Antico* had entirely decayed, and the theatre which then existed had, as we have seen, nothing to offer, either in tragedy or comedy, worthy of representation. It was, therefore, only natural that they should turn to the "melodrama," which held out so tempting and pleasing a prospect.

In this way its very defects, the extravagant scenic decoration, and the elaborate machinery by which it was oppressed and stifled during the seventeenth century, came to be considered as merits. The plot and style of the drama ceased to be of any importance, and the poets and musicians only vied with one another as to which could produce the greatest number of wonderful spectacles in one piece upon the scene.

But it was not in the nature of the divine arts of poetry and music to remain for any length of time in this slavish subserviency. Their triumph became directly manifest when the true poet and musician with heaven-born gifts arose to assert their claims, and the mere accessories of the melodrama assumed their right proportions and fell back into their proper place. No sooner did Apostolo Zeno appear than the taste for extravagant scenery began to give place to a desire for a higher order of dramatic composition. He was the first to replace the drama on its ancient footing of majestic decorum, to be quickly followed by Metastasio, whose melodious poetry was seconded by such sweet harmony as the great masters of the Neapolitan school of music knew best how to produce. But we must not omit to give a few moments' consideration to the poet who first prepared the way for this the climax of perfection in the melodrama.

Apostolo Zeno was born in Venice in 1669. His father, Pietro Zeno, was

a doctor of medicine; his mother, Catarina, belonged to the family of the Sevasti. His graver studies in history and various abstruse sciences—the fruit of which appears in his *Giornale de' Letterati*, still highly thought of in Italy—did not interfere with his attaining his greatest celebrity in that reform of the melodrama, already alluded to, which was so urgently needed. The graceful poetry of his lyric compositions recommended him to the notice of the Emperor Charles VI., who summoned him to Germany, intending to make him poet laureate of the Imperial Court. Charles VI. exercised an influence on the melodrama at the period of its revival so special as to be worthy of attention. It will be noticed by those who read the works of Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio that, with very rare exceptions, they have always been careful to bring their dramas to a happy conclusion, and the reason of this is easily explained. Both poets were under the direct influence of the Emperor, and were well aware that their patron could not endure a tragical end to the melodrama. He wished it laid down as a rule that in this order of dramatic composition the last impression left upon the minds of the audience should never be a melancholy one. The Imperial opinion became a law to the great masters of the reformed melodrama, and thus, in their hands, a guiding principle to their successors. Apostolo Zeno during his residence at the Imperial Court received constant marks of the Emperor's favour, for when he declined to displace the poet laureate of the day by accepting the honour which had been offered to him, the Emperor made him his historian. But notwithstanding these flattering distinctions, notwithstanding the deserved popularity of his dramas, Il Zeno felt a longing which he could not restrain to end his days in his native country. He obtained leave to return to Venice, there to enjoy the full stipend of his office, under the sole obligation of supplying the Imperial Court with a new drama every year. He died in 1750 at Venice. We must pass over his more profound

labours, his various biographies, his indefatigable efforts to improve the Italian language, his careful researches among old manuscripts, to speak of his dramas, with which this paper is especially concerned. In all these compositions, and they were sufficiently numerous to fill ten volumes, Apostolo Zeno was particularly careful in the choice of his "arguments." Thoroughly acquainted with historical lore, whenever its pages offered striking examples either of patriotic zeal, desire for glory, generosity of soul, fortitude in adversity, faithful friendship or tender compassion, he made use of them as fitting subjects for the drama in place of the extravagant nonsense which had been generally chosen for representation during the preceding century. His style is considered correct and sustained, his imagination fertile, his plots carefully developed. Sacred subjects were treated by him with a care and reverence hitherto unknown, for even in the spiritual oratorios first introduced by San Filippo Neri, at Rome, although the music was the work of the great masters, the poetry was considered of little or no consequence, and intrusted to indifferent writers. Apostolo Zeno bent all his powers to the task of investigating the sacred dramas, so far as it was possible, with all the solemnity and dignity which their subjects would inspire. *Il Giuseppe, Il Sisara, Il Danielo, L'Ezechia, Davide*, contain some remarkably fine passages, and the paraphrase of the first chapter of Isaiah¹ in the *Profezie d'Isaia* is very striking:—

"Cieli, udite, udite o genti:
Iddio parla. Attenti, attenti—
Ho nudriti ed ho esaltati
Figli iniqui, e figli ingrati.

"Il giumento e il bue comprese,
Nel presepio il suo gran Dio.
Nol conobbe e non l'intese
Israello, il popol mio," &c.

Still it must be owned that Apostolo Zeno is more to be praised for the laborious industry with which he raised the melodrama out of the deplorable state into which it had fallen than for

any very remarkable genius. Critics have found considerable fault with his dramas for the length of the scenes, the unnecessary multiplication of incidents, often sufficient to furnish two or three tragedies, the dryness and stiffness of his characters, and an occasional harshness of versification in passages intended for recitative. Perhaps, however, these defects did not seem so conspicuous till Metastasio appeared to complete with his unmistakable genius the reform which Zeno had begun, and to carry the melodrama to a perfection which it has since been impossible to surpass.

Pietro Trapassi—called Metastasio—was born in Rome, January 28, 1698. His parents, of humble origin and scanty means, stinted themselves in every way to provide for his instruction in the first rudiments of education. From his earliest years he was accustomed to recite scraps of Italian poetry. It is said that, when one day declaiming a favourite piece, he was accidentally overheard by Vittorio Gravina, one of the tragedians who had endeavoured, though without success, to raise the tone of the drama of the seventeenth century. Gravina knew how to appreciate in others the talents in which he was himself deficient. He undertook to educate the young Trapassi, and, having obtained the parents' leave, finally adopted him as his son. He changed his name from "Trapassi" to "Metastasio," a Greek word which, being equivalent to "trapassamento"—i.e. a transition from one state to another—was probably selected partly as a play upon the old name of his protégé, partly with reference to his change of circumstances. The patron had no occasion to repent of his benevolence. His adopted child, with every external advantage of looks and manner, a countenance beaming with intelligence, a sweet and melodious voice, was a general favourite, and his extraordinary gifts soon made him famous in Rome. Gravina was careful to cultivate the early promise of his talents by an excellent classical education; he encouraged him to employ them in

¹ "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken," &c.

original compositions, and the tragedy of *Giustino* (the only tragedy ever written by Metastasio) was composed at the age of fourteen, in compliance with his patron's request.¹ The plot was taken from Trissino's *Italia Liberata*, and the young author is scarcely to be blamed if he fell into the errors of languor and heaviness which had marred the original poem. Still the *Giustino* contains sufficient merit to make it an astonishing production for so young a writer, and to excite regret that he should never, in his more mature years, have attempted another tragedy. Metastasio, in common with the great classical poets of Italy, was destined for the law, and pursued with diligence the dry and difficult study of jurisprudence. But in 1718 the death of his patron left him at liberty to follow his own inclinations, which speedily diverged into those more pleasant paths of learning, the ancient classics and those of his own country. Among the latter Torquato Tasso was ever his favourite. Gravina filled up the measure of his benevolence by making his adopted son heir to all his worldly possessions, so that Metastasio was no longer in need of a profession to earn his livelihood. Among his numerous writings a touching tribute of gratitude to his patron is to be found in the poem, *La Strada della Gloria*,² written immediately after the death of Gravina, in which Gravina (whom he apostrophises with the fondest affection) appears to him in a dream, and bids him follow without ceasing the path to fame. The genius of Metastasio taught him that his special gifts would find their best scope in the improvement of the melodrama. This, once again brought within the rules observed by Rinuccini in his *Dafne*, and enhanced by music like that which was composed for it by Peri, Caccini, and Mei, appeared

to Metastasio to offer a wide field for his exertions, and a prospect of new and glorious laurels. But his scheme met with a sudden check. Unaccustomed to wealth, and consequently believing that his inheritance could have no limit, he, in a short time, squandered so much of his fortune that he found himself once more compelled, by absolute necessity, to return to the study of the law, which he had abandoned with such delight. Leaving Rome and the false friends who had led him into his extravagant way of life, he repaired for this purpose to Naples, at that time famous for its school of jurisprudence. There were however other schools at Naples more congenial to Metastasio's taste. Three out of the four famous musical Conservatorios³ were still in existence, whose pupils, at that time Gaetano, Jomelli, Caldara, Predieri, and Vinci, &c., would one day set his dramas to music.

Naples was in a state of festive gaiety to celebrate the birth of a daughter to the Emperor Charles VI., and Metastasio was selected as the poet to compose the drama which was to be represented in honour of the occasion. It was in vain that he refused, and at last, on the condition of his secret being strictly kept from his master of jurisprudence, he wrote *Gli Orti Esperidi*, his first melodrama. The universal applause excited by this drama made it impossible to keep the author's name a secret; more especially as the famous *cantatrice*, Maria Bulgarini, called "*La Romanina*," who had acted the part of Venus, declared she would leave no stone unturned till she had discovered the name of the poet who had won her such a shower of laurels. When at last her efforts were crowned with success, she used all her arts to persuade him to dedicate himself exclusively to the composition of the melodrama, for which he appeared to have so remarkable a talent. Metastasio could not withstand

¹ Metastasio protested against the publication of this tragedy with his other works, as quite unworthy to see the light. *Opere*, vol. x., p. 3. Paris edition of 1782.

² Vol. iii. p. 475:

"Del buon Maestro il venerato aspetto,
Riconosco la guancia scolorita,
Del lungo studio," &c., &c.

³ 1. Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo. 2. Conservatorio di San Onofrio. 3. Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto. 4. Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini.

her urgent entreaties; he finally abandoned the law, and gave himself once more heart and soul to an occupation for which he was in every way so eminently fitted. La Bugarini insisted upon receiving him into her own family during the interval which must elapse before he could earn a sufficient livelihood by his new profession, and showered benefits upon him. At her house he learned from the great Porpora some of the science of music, and thus stimulated and encouraged, he wrote *La Didone Abbandonata*, in which La Bugarini again performed the heroine's part, and drew tears from the eyes of the audience. It was afterwards represented in Russia before the Empress Catherine II., being set to music on that occasion by Galuppi of Venice. The Empress, at the conclusion of the piece, sent the great composer a present of a casket of rubies with a message to the effect that the unfortunate Dido, at the point of death, had left them as a legacy to him. La Bugarini next transferred herself and family, always accompanied by her protégé, to Venice, and thence to Rome, where Metastasio's next composition, *Catone in Utica*, was represented. This drama was an exception to the now accepted law that the melodrama should end happily, and was censured on that account. Shortly after its representation a squib appeared inviting *La Compagnia della Morte* to give the corpse of Cato, now lying dead in the theatre, "a decent burial." Metastasio, nothing daunted, produced for the carnival of 1729 *L'Enio* and *La Semiramide*, in the following year, *L'Alessandro nelle Indie*, and *L'Artaserse*, which have all been set to music,¹ some by good, some by indifferent masters. Later in life he improved these dramas, which, when they first appeared, had some of the defects of his early manner, a style too artificial, an intricacy of plot, and an occasional weakness of dialogue. By this time his fame was widely spread, and Apostolo

Zeno, on taking leave of the Emperor, begged to propose as his successor the "best dramatic poet of Italy," the author of *Didone* and *Artaserse*. Metastasio was, in consequence, invited to the Imperial Court (1729) to fill the proud position of "Poeta Cesareo," with the offer of an annual salary of three thousand florins.

His first composition at Vienna was the oratorio of *S. Elena al Calvario*, a sacred drama on *The Invention of the Cross*,² set to music by Caldara, and represented in the Imperial Chapel during the Holy Week 1731. In this, as in all of his sacred dramas, there are many beautiful passages.³ Those taken from the Old Testament are *Giuseppe riconosciuto*,⁴ *L'Isaaco*,⁵ *La Morte d'Abele*, *Gioas*,⁶ in which he is said to have borrowed some ideas from Racine's *Athalie*. That from the New Testament, for the *Santissimo Natale*, recalls some of the varied and beautiful ideas of Milton's *Ode on the Nativity*. In that same year he composed *L'Olimpiade* and *Il Demofonte*, two of his masterpieces, written in the best period of his second manner, showing more precision and simplicity in the dialogue, a greater sobriety of narration, and a combination of vigour and delicacy in the *ariette*. In 1734 Metastasio was engaged upon another sacred drama, *La Betulia Liberata*, treating of Judith and Holofernes, when intelligence reached him of the death of his friend and patroness, La Bugarini, also that she had left him all her worldly possessions. But Metastasio at once renounced this second inheritance in favour of the husband of the famous *cantatrice*. He was deeply affected by the death of one who had been so real a benefactress, to whom, in fact, he owed his present fame, and *La Betulia Liberata* bears the stamp of the sorrow which her loss occasioned in him. It contains arguments worthy of a theo-

² Observed in our Calendar, September 14.

³ *Giuseppe riconosciuto*, Metastasio, *Opere*, vol. 3, pp. 33, 54, 61. *Morte d'Abele*, *ibid.* 78, 82, 101.

⁴ Set to music by Predieri, represented 1740.

⁵ Set to music by Porsili, represented 1733.

⁶ Set to music by Reutter, represented 1735.

¹ Forty different compositions of *Artaserse*, and thirty-six of *Alessandro*, are quoted in Clement's *Dictionnaire lyrique*.

logian as to the belief in the true God, winding up with the conclusive reply to the idolater's disbelieving questions.

"Se Dio veder tu vuoi
Guardalo in ogni oggetto,
Cercalo nel tuo petto,
Lo troverai con te.

"E, se dov' ei dimora
Non intendesti ancora,
Confondimi, se puoi,
Dimmi dov' Ei non è."¹

He borrows all the ornaments of Eastern imagery to enrich his dialogue, while the beauty of the inspired words, "Sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously," are recalled to our minds by the chorus—

"Lodi al gran Dio, che oppresse
Gli empj nemici suo,
Che combattè per noi
Che trionfo così."

La Clemenza di Tito (set to music by Caldara) was another production of this year, which Voltaire esteemed so highly as to declare that it rivalled the most sublime passages of Corneille and the most finished touches of Racine. Many others followed in quick succession, among others, *Le Cinesi*, his single comic opera.

In 1736, on the occasion of the marriage of Maria Theresa with Francis Duke of Lorraine, he wrote one of his cleverest and most amusing dramas, *L'Achille in Sciro*, in which, by representing the hero as torn in pieces by the passion of love contending with the desire for military glory, he seized the opportunity of paying the bridegroom a graceful compliment. It was not thrown away upon Francis, who in return offered to make the poet count, baron, privy-councillor, anything, in short, he liked. But Metastasio refused all honours, and continued steadily at work upon his dramas, which had now obtained a European fame. The death of Charles VI., the

Seven Years' War which ensued, public calamities, and private infirmities arrested his labours for a time, but resuming them in 1749, he finished his *Attilio Regolo*, and sent it to Hasse to be set to music. It was his favourite production, and he used to declare that if he could only have saved one out of all his dramas he would have chosen the *Attilio*. To the general reader it does not offer so much attraction as many others. After this his poetical genius did not reach any loftier summit of perfection. He sustained his second manner through the *Re Pastore*, the *Trionfo di Clelio*, the *Nitteti*, *Romolo*, *L'Atenaide*, and *L'Egeria*, composed for the coronation of the Emperor Joseph, in which Maria Theresa said she recognised the undiminished vigour of his great genius.² But in his declining years he had a third manner inferior to the second, of which *La Festa Teatrale* and *Il Ruggiero* are the most favourable specimens. Two odes, one of sympathy with the Empress on the loss of her husband, the other in praise of her villa at Schönbrunn, procured him two notes of graceful compliment from Maria Theresa;³ nor must we pass over the slight thread which connects him with the youngest Archduchess of Austria, afterwards the beautiful Dauphine, and finally the noble and hapless Queen of France. The undying sympathy which her fate must ever excite bids us pause with affectionate interest over the well-known couplet with which Metastasio ushered her birth into the world,⁴ and the graceful *Complimenti*, as they were called, which he wrote for her to repeat when only five years, to celebrate her parents' respective birthdays, in the year 1760. They were set to music by Hasse, and arranged by Metastasio as a miniature drama, to be performed by the two sisters, Maria Carolina, afterwards Queen of Naples,

² Vol. vi., *Opere di Metastasio*, p. 260.

³ *Ibid.* p. 263.

⁴ Vol. xi., p. 273. To the Empress Maria Theresa:

"Io perdei: l'augusta Figlia
A pagar mi ha condannato
Ma s'è ver che a Voi somiglia,
Tutto il mondo ha guadagnato."

¹ *La Betulia Liberata*, parte seconda, p. 545. The writer has refrained from translating Metastasio's *ariette*, partly because they would lose so much of their grace and delicacy in the process, partly because they are so simple in their beauty that any one can understand them.

and Marie Antoinette. The heavier of the two parts seems to have fallen on Maria Carolina, then eight years old, who tries to prepare her sister for the august ceremony, to which the youngest archduchess replies—

“Prepararmi e perchè?
 Che dirai?
 Io gli dirò che l' amo,
 Ch' essergli cara io bramo,
 Che m' ami io gli dirò,
 Ch' altro nel cor non ho.” i

In the beautiful edition of Metastasio, published at Paris in 1780, and dedicated to Queen Marie Antoinette, a few graceful stanzas by Giuseppe Pezzana recall to her memory how in her childhood Metastasio used to teach her his *soave note*, and beg her to smile upon this new edition of his works from that lofty throne which she now adorns with every grace and virtue.

After the death of Maria Theresa, the Emperor Joseph continued to extend the same favours to Metastasio which he had enjoyed during the two preceding reigns, but his long and distinguished life was fast drawing to a close, and on the 12th of April, 1782, he died at Vienna, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

Metastasio is considered by the greatest of his native critics to have surpassed all the other dramatic poets of Italy in the delicacy with which he has painted the passions, and the refinement with which he has expressed the affections of his *dramatis personæ*. There is no depth of the soul which his eloquence does not reach, no secret feeling which does not respond to his touch, and on this account he was prized by all readers, of all ages, and all conditions of life. This tender feeling may be said to be the leading feature of all his poetical works; but although his lyrics² would alone have won for him distinguished laurels, his fame really rests upon his dramas, which of their special kind are models of excellence. The plot of each drama naturally and simply unfolds itself—a

verse, a word even, often suffices to make it clear. From the very beginning he is careful to inform the audience what it is needful for them to know, explaining the past and present, and preparing the way for the future with an ease and a dexterity quite unrivalled by any other dramatic poet. The opening scenes of the *Temistocle* and the *Artaserse* are worth referring to as specimens of this peculiar merit. The dialogue is smooth and rapid, avoiding equally the long narratives of the tragedians of the sixteenth century, and the ambitious ornaments of the modern French school, and bringing that vivacity of action on the scene which is the very life of dramatic representation. The plots are so carefully worked out that even those melodramas which were prepared with an especial view to musical rendering can be given, equally well and with the same effect, when merely recited. He has left his own opinion on record as to the secondary place which music should occupy in the melodrama. “When music,” he says, “aspires to hold a position of equal importance with poetry in the drama it ruins the drama as well as itself. It would be as great an absurdity to suppose that the dress of the person is of as much consequence as the individual himself. My dramas are proved, throughout Italy, by daily experience, to be more sure of a good reception when recited by actors than when musically rendered.”³ In this same letter he refers to the amount of music employed in the old Greek tragedies, a subject upon which he enlarges at full length in his careful extract from the *Poetics* of Aristotle. This extract, or rather analysis, was made in the first instance for his own instruction to guide him in the composition of his dramas, according to those strict rules of art which he was always careful to maintain. It was afterwards printed at the request of his friends. The operas which are best known to have been also declaimed are the *Didone*, the *Clemenza di Tito*, *Siroe*, *Catone in Utica*, *Demofoonte*, and *Alessandro nelle Indie*.

¹ Vol. xi. p. 256.

² See especially his Ode to the Spring. *Giuride Primavera*, *Opere*, vol. ii. p. 525.

³ *Lettere sopra la Musica*, vol. ix., p. 365.

Goldoni, in his youth, was asked, when at Feltri, to choose a drama for representation, and he selected the *Didone* and the *Siroe*, which were accordingly represented, but *senza musica misi soltanto le arie in recitativo*.¹ On these occasions the final choruses were omitted, but the airs were retained as connecting links of the dialogue. Indeed the Italian language, whose very prose is poetry, and whose poetry is music, almost naturally falls into recitative, and the ease with which Metastasio's compositions adapt themselves either to the opera or the drama would seem to prove this point. Again, the constant transposition of the parts of speech gives the Italian language an immense advantage, when employed either in oratory, poetry, or music, because the arrangement of the words is not governed by the natural order of the ideas, but according as the rounding of the period best pleases the ear. Take, for example, the opening lines of the *Orlando Furioso*, already once cited in this paper, "*Le donne, i cavalieri*," &c. Every one perceives how the harmony of the verse is perfected by placing the words "*io canto*" at the end. Place them at the beginning, in their natural grammatical position, and who would recognise the pen of the immortal Ariosto? Of course this, like every other rhetorical art, is liable to be abused, as in truth it was by the *Cinquecentisti*, the *Speronis*, *Dolcei*, and *Casas* of the sixteenth century. But Metastasio knew well how to avail himself of this inversion peculiar to the Italian language without carrying it to excess. He knew also how to make full use of the other great facilities for poetry in which it was naturally prolific, the imitative character of its phrases, the richness and variety of its terminations, the flexibility afforded by the augmentatives and diminutives, and profiting by each and all of these advantages, he wove them into a style so clear and sparkling, into verses so flowing and melodious, that without the effort of learning them they remain indelibly impressed on the mind. Not only did Metastasio overcome the diffi-

culty of expressing with freedom and vigour in poetry those shades of affection and desire which it would have been no easy task to clothe in the ordinary language of prose, but he also contended successfully with the difficulty especially connected with his order of poetry, namely, that of adapting it to the music on which the success of the melodrama must in a great measure depend. Every sort of arbitrary rule interfered to hamper his genius—the supposed necessity of limiting each drama to a certain number of verses, of making each scene end with an air; the prohibition that one air should follow another on the lips of the same personage, the restriction of the *recitative*, within brief limits broken by the alternate speeches of each person as he appears on the scene, and many other artificial and irksome laws, which, however unnecessary they may appear, had to be carefully considered and adhered to by the then writers of the musical drama. These were some of the difficulties with which he battled, and over which he won so complete a triumph, that Italy is not only indebted to him for his compositions as a poet, but also for the high summit of musical perfection attained by the melodrama during this century.

The famous composers of the age were no doubt to a great extent inspired by Metastasio's genius. They caught, as it were, the rays of his brilliant poetical fancy, in order to reflect them and repeat them to their own divine art; and no one ever succeeded better than Metastasio in making the Italian language lend itself to the requirements of music. Discarding all words which were unsuitable for song, either from their length or from the harshness of their sound, he chose only those which, by their sweetness, or by the position of their accent, as in *ardì, piegò, sarà*, were peculiarly adapted for musical rendering. He divides the verses to shorten the periods and render the pause more agreeable; he makes a discreet use of the rhyme, so as to please the ear, without becoming monotonous. Then, seconded by music, he has the

¹ *Mem. del Sig. Goldoni*, t. i., p. 98.

art of making his verses exactly accord with the affections he wishes to describe. If he would paint the enervating influence of the tender passion, each line seems to shadow forth the fulness of a feeling which can scarcely find utterance in speech;¹ the full, quick throb of courage, and his words succeed each other with bounding rapidity;² the delighted measure of hope; the low, sullen sounds of despair; the loud clash of anger; the dread blast of revenge; the soul-subduing voice of dejected pity; the veering song of jealousy, which now courted love, now, raving, called on hate; or the mingled measure of pale melancholy, which stole

"O'er some haunted stream with fond delay
Round a holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace and lonely musing
In hollow murmurs died away."³

Thoroughly understanding the character of the opera, Metastasio knew how to make it combine the claims of lyrical and dramatic poetry. It is to be noticed how carefully he reserves his figures and metaphors for his narrative and descriptive scenes, never employing them when he wishes to make the affections speak. How rarely he introduces his comparisons into the *recitative*, leaving them for the *ariette* when the music requires imagery and warmth. We will select only one, and that the most perfect specimen, of the countless examples of lyric beauty which his dramas afford:—

"L'onda dal mar divisa
Bagna la valle, il monte
Va Passagiera
In Fiume,
Va Prigionera
In Fonte.
Mormora sempre, e geme
Finchè non torna al mar,
Al Mar dov' ella nacque,
Dove acquistò gli umori,
Dove dai lunghi errori
Spera di riposar."⁴

We have seen how perfect was the harmony established by Metastasio between music and poetry, but he did not

rest satisfied until he had made the sister art of painting also contribute her services to perfect his work. The dexterity shown by him in managing this interesting portion of the melodrama is worthy of attention. His careful choice of the circumstances of his scenery, the masterly manner with which he varies the local situations, the study of contrast in those scenes which appeal more to the eye than to the ear, the intimate knowledge of the geographical position, manners, customs, dress of the different nations—everything, in short, which may lawfully enhance the effect of his *mise-en-scène*, every sort of ingenious contrivance, every kind of pleasing picture may be found in the scenical directions for his dramas.

These were some of the striking features of the great reform worked by Metastasio in the taste of Italy, but the high religious and moral tone of his works exercised a still more beneficial, as well as a more lasting, influence over his country. Never, surely, was the truth conveyed to men's minds in more *mollis versi* than by him. Never was virtue depicted in more amiable or more glowing colours than in those characters which he places before us for our imitation.

Apart from his manifold charms, this alone would suffice to maintain him his place in the opinion of worthy minds, more especially as the effect is spontaneous, and not forced, as it is in some of the French dramatists. It seems to be the self-evident conclusion of each dramatic work; as, for instance, in the *Ezio*, where the whole moral of the play naturally sums itself up in the concluding lines:—

"Della vita nel dubbio cammino,
Si smarrisce l'umano pensier,
L'innocenza è quell' astro divino,
Che rischiarà fra l'ombre il sentier."

Then, if we consider his power in representing the affections, no one has depicted them with more grace and delicacy, so that Metastasio has ever been the favourite author whose works

¹ *Zenobia*, act ii. sc. 5.

² *Olimpiade*, act iii. sc. 4.

³ Collins's *Ode to the Passions*.

⁴ *Artaserse*, act iii. sc. 1.

all alike may read and enjoy. No one knew so well how to appeal to the heart; no one could better invest his characters with the motives which would naturally guide them. His touches are always those of a great master—clear, distinct, tender, and sublime.

Perhaps this extreme facility may have occasionally led him into a snare. He has been reproached with introducing too great a number of romantic episodes into one piece. Not content with one primary plot or passion, on which the whole drama turns, he gives each of the subordinate characters—as, for example, in the *Semiramide*—its separate romance; so that in these secondary positions it becomes hackneyed, frivolous, and insipid. The passion of Timante for Dircea (*Demofoonte*) is real, pathetic, tender to the last degree; so is the primary romance in the *Zenobia* and the *Temistocle*: but when all the subordinate characters play the same part, the force of the predominant interest of the play is weakened.

This is the principal cause of the want of power in Metastasio's characters—a want which is sometimes made more apparent by the smooth, gliding verses and the tripping *ariette* in which the courtly poet makes his Roman and Carthaginian heroes, to say nothing of the one-eyed monster, Polypheme, pay their addresses to their respective ladies.

To the same cause may be attributed an occasional superfluity of scenes, merely inserted for the sake of giving

fresh scope for his favourite passion, and which, far from advancing the general action of the drama, only retard it, break the unity, and divert the threads which were converging towards the central point of interest. These slight defects might be illustrated by passages from the dramas, but the space has been already occupied with the more pleasing task of pointing out beauties which are quite inimitable, and before which these trifling flaws fade into insignificance.

His justly-earned fame won him not only the unanimous applause of his own country, but also that of most of the crowned heads of Europe, who invited him to their courts, and vied with one another how best to do him honour; but he remained faithful to the German sovereigns who had first befriended him, and who had bestowed upon him the proud title of "Poeta Cesareo," which he enjoyed for so many years. Pure and loyal in the midst of the temptations of a courtier's life, free from the ambition and envy which sometimes mar the character of great literary men, modest when applauded to the skies, he preserved that gentleness and simplicity of character which, often transpiring in his verses, imparts to them so much of their charm. He proved the truth of his own maxim—

"Un alma grande
È teatro a se stessa. Ella in segreto
S'approva, e si condanna,
E placida, e sicura
Del volgo spettator l'aura non cura."
Artascroe, act ii. sc. 2.

CATHERINE MARY PHILLIMORE.

To be continued.

THE BOGIES OF BULGARIAN SONG.

If, as sung by their own countrymen, the brigands of Bulgaria¹ are worse than any brigands that are to be found elsewhere, something analogous may be said of the elves proper to Bulgarian superstition, the native bards still being taken as authorities. Perhaps they are not quite so original in their badness, but every malignant quality recorded in fairy lore they have taken good care to secure. No Bulgarian Cinderella could have found a godmother to turn a pumpkin into a coach-and-six; no amiable figure presents itself that a Countess d'Aulnoy could have rendered presentable at the court of the Grand Monarch, and that Mr. J. R. Planché could have introduced into one of his elegant burlesques. There are none of those playful tiny fays who are distinctly visible to the mind's eye of a reader of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and can be but gawkily represented on the stage. Pleasant spirits, who keep in order the household of an industrious family when everybody is fast asleep, are not to be found. But all that belongs to child-stealing and that sort of thing we have in abundance. Take, for instance, our mischievous Puck, intensify his mischief into deliberate malignity, turn "Robin Goodfellow" into "Robbing Badfellow," and unsex him quite, and you will arrive at something that approximates to the terrible Samodivas of Bulgaria, who may as well be introduced in a native ballad:—

Where the sun is setting,
There a young maiden lies asleep,
On a spot of danger fast asleep,
On the spot where dance the Samodivas,
Where the cowherds often stop.
When from sleep the maiden woke,

Close to her three girls were sitting
And these girls were Samodivas.
Thus the first of them begins:
"Let us take Marika, let her
Be the priestess of the Samodivas."
But the second thus objected:
"Nay, how can we take Marika,
When she is her mother's only child,
Being son and daughter to her both?"
Out then boldly spake the third:
"Such a child is suited but for us;
We prefer an only child,
For we like to make a mother weep
Every Monday at the trough,
Every Tuesday in the little garden,
In the garden, likewise in the field,
In the field and in the vineyard too."
Then they all said to Marika:
"Quickly raise thyself, Marika,
Raise thyself and hasten home,
Tell thy mother
That we have resolv'd to make thee
Priestess of the Samodivas;
Thou shalt come into our country
See how happy is our life;
Never do we weave or spin,
Every day brings dance and fiddles,
Every day brings hearty feasting;
Tell thy mother all we tell thee,
She will surely be delighted."
To her home returned Marika,
And she told all to her mother;—
Then her soul at once departed.

The particular malignity shown by the third Samodiva, when she reflects on the misery caused to a mother, may be compared to the joy felt by a Bulgarian brigand when he remembers how many families he has plunged into grief. The especial honour conferred on poor Marika should not, however, pass unnoticed. The word in the original corresponding to "priestess" is "popadia," the title commonly given to the wife of a pope or priest. M. Dozon, the great authority in these matters, says that he never met a priestess of the Samodivas elsewhere. In one of his comedies Congreve mentions the chaplain to an atheist.

The wrath of the Samodivas when under the influence of their most violent moods is shown in a ballad treating

¹ Vide *The Brigands of Bulgarian Song*, p. 362.

of the unhappy lot of one of those very numerous young gentlemen named Stoian :—

To Stoian his mother said :
 "Stoian, my son, pray heed me,
 Take care not to drive your flock
 Through the Samodiva's forest.
 If, however, thou must go there,
 Do not play thy flageolet,
 Lest, perchance, thou may'st be heard
 By the savage Samodiva,
 Who may come to fight with thee."
 Stoian paid no attention,
 But at once he drove his flock
 Through the Samodiva's forest ;
 And he played the flageolet,
 And he call'd the Samodiva
 With him on the spot to wrestle.
 Then the Samodiva came,
 As a boy with hair dishevelled,
 And they clapp'd their hands and closed ;
 And for three whole days they wrestled.
 Stoian had nearly conquered,
 When the Samodiva shouted :
 "Hear me, hear me, sisters, tempests,
 Stoian will overcome me !"
 Down then came the elements,
 Fiercely raged the hurricanes,
 Till they lifted up Stoian,
 Till upon a branch they fixed him ;
 And from tree-top unto tree-top
 He was whirl'd and torn to pieces,
 While his flock abroad was scatter'd.

The theory that the Samodiva is primarily an impersonation of the hurricane receives confirmation from the song. But it must not be laid hold of as a master-key, by means of which a natural interpretation of every wild story may be obtained, since the instances where it utterly fails are numerous. There is nothing of the hurricane, for example, in the Samodiva of the following ballad, who, strange to say, is of a benevolent disposition :—

A hero, a Pomak, has gone to the accursed war,
 The war against the Tatars.
 He is wounded by three hundred balls,
 By three hundred balls—three Tatar arrows.
 Into a deep vale the hero fell,
 Into a deep vale at the foot of a green tree ;
 And upon the tree sat a falcon.
 Stretch'd on the black soil the hero groan'd,
 And his voice ascended to the sky.
 Then the falcon thus began to say :
 "Die, Pomak, die, gallant pallikar,
 I shall eat thy milk-white flesh,
 I shall drink thy crimson blood."
 Anger'd was the wounded pallikar.

Thus spoke out the brave Pomak :
 "Silence, bird, and irritate me not,
 Let me not envenom all my wounds."
 But the falcon said again :
 "Die, Pomak, die, gallant pallikar,
 I shall eat thy milk-white flesh,
 I shall drink thy crimson blood."
 The wounded hero now was moved to wrath ;
 He crawl'd along upon his hands,
 He reach'd his long Albanian gun,
 And fired upon the falcon.
 The falcon fell into the valley deep.
 On the black soil the falcon groan'd,
 And its voice ascended to the sky.
 The wounded hero said :
 "Groan, thou bird, we'll groan together ;
 Lie there, bird, we'll lie together ;
 Die, thou bird, we'll die together."
 The pallikar was tired of lying there,
 Wounded as he was, and shouted :
 "Where art thou, my sister, Samodiva ?
 Come, my sister, come and heal me."
 And the Samodiva heard him,
 Started forth, and soon was at his side ;
 Washed the wounds those hundred balls had made,
 And the wounds of those three Tatar arrows ;
 Gather'd simples known to Samodivas,
 Bound his wounds and healed them in a day,
 That he might rise and go
 Once again to battle with the Tsar.

This excellent Samodiva is so very unlike Samodivas in general that the reader should be apprised of the fact that, in the very manuscript which contained the original of the above song M. Dozon found another, in which the wounded pallikar, after holding a similar dialogue with a bird and breaking its wing, was by this very bird healed of his many hurts. Notable, too, are the name Pomak, which is commonly used to denote a Bulgarian who has adopted the Mohammedan religion, and the circumstance that the hero calls upon the Samodiva as his sister. The fairy, perhaps, had Turkish proclivities, and the benevolence which in our ignorance we admire may have been a sign of unmitigated depravity. In that case the Tsar would be the Sultan ; but it is also considered probable that he was one of the ancient emperors of Bulgaria. Nevertheless, all that purports to belong to antique Bulgaria is so extremely uncertain, that unless we intend to devote ourselves to a very rigid investigation, the less we have to do with it the better. We are not yet

prepared for the great Bulgarian monarch Iskander and his horse Bucephalus.

A ballad which treats of the marriage of a Samodiva against her will is worth mentioning, although the subject belongs to a family spread all over Europe, if only for the sake of one little peculiarity. While one of the Stoians, we learn, was playing on the flute, he observed three Samodivas come bathing under circumstances very similar to those under which Aktaeon incurred the wrath of Artemis. He surreptitiously possessed himself of the garments which they had cast aside before going into the water, and when they had returned to the bank, they all begged him to restore them :—

The eldest said :

"Stoian, return my garments :
For I have a dread stepmother
Who assuredly would kill me."

Stoian made no reply,
But he gave her back her garments.

To him then the second said :

"Stoian, return my garment :
It is new, and I have brothers
Who would slay both thee and me."

Stoian made no reply,
But he gave her back her garment.

Then the third, by name Marika,
Spoke in turn to Stoian :

"Stoian, return my garment :
Pray restore my wondrous garment :
I'm my mother's only child,
To her I'm both son and daughter ;

Then, Stoian, do not think
To take to wife a Samodiva.
She would not mind thy house,
Would not heed thee or thy children."

Stoian then mildly answered :

"'Tis for such a girl I'm seeking,
For a mother's only child."

Then he took her home forthwith,
And with other garments clad her.

Then he duly married her,

And the witness was St. John.

That is to say, St. John placed upon the bride's head the crown (venetz) which is worn during the ceremony. When Stoian had been married about three years his wife gave birth to a male child, to whom St. John, in accordance with custom, was godfather. A great feast was held on the occasion of the baptism, when an odd notion occurred to St. John. He suggests that Stoian should play upon his bagpipe in order

that his wife may dance after the manner of the Samodivas. Stoian plays as requested, and Marika dances like an ordinary mortal ; but this does not satisfy St. John, who asks her why she will not dance after the fashion of her race. She informs him that she cannot do so without her pristine garments, and instructs St. John to persuade her husband to give them. The poor man, who thinks that she has settled down, allows himself to be talked over by the saint ; but no sooner is Marika in possession of the clothes, than she suddenly makes a pirouette.

And she hurries up the chimney,
Takes her stand upon the house-top,
Hisses like a Samodiva ;
And at last says to her husband :
"Stoian, I plainly told thee,
Houses suit not Samodivas."
Then she leapt on high and went
To the solitary forests,
The abode of Samodivas."

The naturally spiteful disposition of the Samodivas appears in the sudden obliteration of all feeling for human ties which pervades her farewell speech, and it is strange that she finds such a ready ally in the person of St. John.¹ Very different is the spirit of a story, belonging to the same large family, brought from Finland by Dr. Bertram. In this a hunter, separating himself from his comrades, pursues a reindeer into the courtyard of a house, situated in a deep forest, which proves to be the residence of the Sylvan God Tapio, who becomes his friend at once. When the following morning arrives, he cannot find his snow-shoes, but Tapio, instead of giving them, asks him if he would rather become his son-in-law, and remain where he is.

The proposal is accepted with delight, and the hunter becomes the husband of Tapio's only daughter, Annikka. After

¹ It depends upon which St. John is intended. If St. John the Baptist, the wild Bedouin prophet of the desert and the representative of the fierce Elijah, there is little or no inconsistency ; and the dancing of Marika may be connected with the dancing of the daughter of Herodias which led to St. John's death.—
EDITOR.

the lapse of three years, during which a child has been born, he is seized with a desire to return home, and Tapio, when informed of it, says that his desire shall be gratified if he will make for him a satisfactory pair of snow-shoes. After two failures the hunter, following the advice of a judicious little bird, performs the appointed task: He is to be accompanied by his wife and child, and his father-in-law, who undertakes to provide them on their route, enjoins him to stop and pass the night wherever he finds a fitting spot, at the same time warning him to make his temporary lodging thick, that it may not be penetrated by the light of the stars. This advice given, Tapio glided off in his new shoes, and soon afterwards the hunter, his wife and their child, took their departure in a sledge, following the foot-marks of their guide in the snow. Late on that and the following evenings, they found two fitting resting places, with a roasted deer by way of repast, and on each occasion made themselves a hut of the proper density. On the third evening they found only a roasted bird left for their refreshment, whence the hunter concluded that they must be near home, and, rendered careless by delight, laid the branches less thickly together. Sad to say, when he awoke in the morning his wife had fled. She had not been able to resist the fascination of the stars when they twinkled through the branches, and the spirits of the forest and the air bore her away from her mortal husband to return to her equals. The trace of Tapio's feet had also disappeared, and the hunter sat a desolate man in the front of his hut, staring listlessly before him. All his love for the chase had departed, and although a deer darted by, it passed almost unnoticed. But in the morning there was a roasted bird at the fire, with which he refreshed himself and his little son, and then returned to his position in the front of his hut; and in this manner, whole years flowed away, every morning a meal was ready, and every day a deer flitted by. This

deer was Annikka herself, who had assumed that shape to bring food to her former husband, and to see her child, and she never looked upon them without tears in her eyes. When the son had grown up he displayed more than ordinary talent, made a sort of telescope out of a hollow reed, and was thus enabled to conduct the hunter to his native home. He has a name in mythical history as the ancestor of the Laplanders; but the story is cited here for the sake of contrasting the Bulgarian Samodiva, who leaves her husband and child with a malignant hiss, and the woodland goddess of the Finns, who, after she has returned to her pristine state, continues to watch over the objects of her early affections.

Very closely allied to the Samodivas is the dragon (*zmei*), to whom there are a corresponding female and young ones. There is a ballad in which one is confounded with the other, and perhaps both ought to be classed under the common head "Youda," which seems to denote an elementary spirit, and which, as M. Dozon conjectures, possibly takes its name from Judas Iscariot, who might easily be associated with the evil agencies of a spiritual world. Both Samodiva and dragons are assailed by spells with doubtful success. The following ballad recounts a failure:—

To fetch water Rada went one day
To the fountain of the dragons.
When she was returning home,
Two dragons met her on her way,
Two dragons—forms of fire.
The elder dragon passed her by,
The younger dragon stopp'd her;
His thirst he at her pitcher quench'd,
Then thus he spake to Rada:
"Rada, Rada, pretty pet,
Ev'ry evening when thou comest
Thou hast brought with thee a posy
Gayer than thou bringst me now."
To the dragon thus said Rada:
"Dragon, pray, thou fiery creature,
Prithee, dragon, let me pass,
And no longer keep me here;
For my mother is bedridden,
Grievous is her suffering,
And she stands in need of water."
Then to Rada said the dragon:
"Hear me, young and lovely Rada,
Tell thy falsehoods to another,

But ne'er tell them to a dragon ;
For the dragon's flight is lofty,
And the dragon's sight is piercing ;
Just now I pass'd above thy house,
There in the upper room thy mother,
The sorceress, the witch, is seated ;
There for thee she makes a garment,
Sewing to it all the herbs,
All the herbs that waken hate,
Herbs that lead to separation.
That I may hate thee, my Rada.
She, the sorceress, the enchantress,
Charms the forest and the water.
She a living snake has taken,
Into a new pot has put it.
Has beneath it kindled charcoal,
Of white charcoal is the fire,
And the snake has with'd and twisted,
Hissed and twisted in the vessel,
While thy mother spoke her charms :
' Even as the snake is writhing,
Thus Bulgarians, and Turks too,
Writhe, and make the dragon hate her ;
Hate her, follow her no more.'
As the charm is not completed
I have come to take thee now."
Scarcely had the dragon finished,
When aloft he carried Rada,
Even to the sky above,
To the caverns that are yawning
On the highest mountain-tops.

The subject of the following ballad seems to me extremely curious :—

Stoian is soundly rated
By his mother, loudly scolded :
" Stoian, son Stoian,
What betokens this strange conduct ?
We have had our youthful days,
We have known the time of courtship,
But we ne'er saw aught so strange
As your conduct, son Stoian.
Thou go'st up and down the village,
And thou call'st upon Malamka :
' Serve my breakfast hot, Malamka,
Give me, likewise, a good dinner,
And, Malamka, a good supper,
For I shall not go back home,
Shall not breakfast there my breakfast,
There I shall not dine my dinner,
There I shall not sup my supper."

[In the last three lines cited above, an instance is given of an idiom very common with the Bulgarians, by which the notion embodied in the verb is repeated in a substantive. This of course corresponds to a well-known Grecism, of which ἡδόμεναι τὰς μεγίστας ἡδονὰς may serve as an example. In English we have the analogous expression, "Fight a good fight."]

Stoian was moved to shame,
And to God this prayer he offer'd :

"Change me, change me, I implore Thee,
To what animal Thou wilt.
To an eagle, grey and white,
I would soar into the skies,
And let all think I was lost ;
Would descend then as an eagle
To the garden of Malamka."
God received his prayer with pity,
And transform'd him to an eagle.
Then he soar'd into the clouds,
Then descended and alighted
In the garden of Malamka.
She was there transplanting flow'rs,
And Stoian drew the water
Which Malamka scatter'd o'er them.
Now the mother of Stoian,
When her son had disappear'd,
To Malamka's dwelling went,
There to see if he were hidden,
And walk'd straight into the garden.
Fiercely spake she to Malamka :
"Thou hast driven my boy away."
Stoian approach'd his mother,
As an eagle grey and white,
And caress'd her with his wings ;
And his mother recognized him,
And his wings she tore away.

It will be observed that in the above ballad there is no mention of Samodiva or dragon. Malamka simply appears as a mortal girl more than ordinarily attractive, and her lover prays to become an eagle, that he may reside in her garden. It is the Deity Himself who grants his request. Still his affection for his mother is not extinct, as he shows by his caresses. Is the conjecture permissible that the story is not quite perfect ; that Malamka is not quite so innocent as she looks ; and that we ought to know what became of Stoian after his wings had been pulled out by his too-devoted mother ?

Most classical of the "bogies" of Bulgaria, as I have pleased to call them from their resemblance to the mythical terrors of the nursery, is the Lamia (Λαμία), who seems to have come from the Greeks. In one of the accounts of the Skylla, that well-known monster who, associated with Charybdis, has acquired a proverbial reputation, is the daughter of Lamia. The beings here especially referred to commonly reside in wells and lakes, and concede the use of the waters in consideration of a tribute of human victims, generally of young girls. One of them very appropriately appears in a ballad, in which

the principal figure is St. George, and which, we learn, is one of the numerous songs sung in Bulgaria on the festival of that saint :—

St. George has sallied forth,
Early in the morning of St. George's day,
That he may cross the country while the corn
is green.

To meet him, lo ! a fallow Lamia comes,
A fallow Lamia with three heads.

Thus begins St. George to speak :

"Take thou heed, thou fallow Lamia,
I shall wield my golden mace,
And shall smite off thy three heads ;
Thence three torrents will rush forth,
Torrents of the blackest blood."
But the fallow Lamia turned not,
So the saint brought forth his mace,
And struck off the heads all three ;
Thence three streams came rushing out,
Torrents of the blackest blood.

For the labourers was the first,

Yielding finest corn ;

For the shepherds was the second,

Yielding freshest milk ;

For the vine-dressers the third,

Yielding noble wine.

Master of this house, arise,

'Tis to thee we sing,

Pray to God for thy good health,

And all sorts of happiness.

M. Dozon makes mention of another ballad, in which St. George still more closely resembles the hero of the "Seven Champions," rescuing a lady corresponding to Sabra. Moreover the Lamia throws up, living, all the girls whom she has devoured during three years.

So much for the "bogies" of Bulgarian song ; and I close the article with an obviously Christian ballad, which has nothing to do with them, save that it is contained in the same collection as the above, simply because it seemed too pretty and too remarkable to be passed over :—

A mother had a daughter,
A daughter named Ianka ;
Since the day that she was born
Docile she has ever been.

Poor Ianka now is sick.

At her side her mother sits,

At her pillow sits her father.

The Lord has sent His angels

Down into this lower world,

Here to find a Christian soul,

And bear it straight to Paradise,

There to cultivate the flowers ;

For the flow'rs are wither'd there,

Dead the basil and the pink ;

So the Lord has sent His angels

To discover sinless souls.

Hither have the angels come,

Down into the lower world ;

And they find Ianka without sin,

But they are unable to approach her,

For her mother's tears prevent them,

And her father's groans prevent them.

To the Lord return the angels,

Saying, "Lord, we are unable

To approach a sinless maiden,

For the mother's tears prevent us,

And her father's groans prevent us."

The Lord then sow'd an apple-tree ;

Before morn the tree had budded,

And at noon it was in blossom,

It bore fruit long ere the sunset,

Three apples of pure gold.

God Himself the apples gather'd,

And He gave them to the angels

To be carried to Ianka ;

Also give them this command :

"Give one apple to the mother,

And another to the father,

And the third give to Ianka."

Then the angels came to earth,

Gave an apple to the mother,

And another to the father,

And the other to Ianka.

Then Ianka smiled,

And her mother left the chamber

To repose herself from mourning ;

Her Ianka would be cured.

Then the angels took the soul

And they bore it to the Lord.

And the Lord went forth to meet it,

Led it into Paradise.

There Ianka tends the flow'rs,

And they bloom the more she tends them.

When the mother had returned,

Then she said to her Ianka :

"Never, child, since thou wast born

Didst thou disobey me—never ;

Now thou hast watched my absence

To deliver up thy soul."

JOHN OXENFORD.

SONNETS.

I.

DAY after day I watch a level shore
 That the sea chafes and vexes into strife,
 And hear the earth give back a sullen roar
 When eager waves would bring it light and life.
 I linger though the voice of duty cries,
 And bids me seek a path I fear to tread,
 Lest I should lose the memory of thine eyes,
 Oh love, and walk alone among the dead.
 Thou shalt speak for me, love, I turn to thee;
 Oh tell me shall I follow them that weep,
 And toil and know not rest, nor ever see
 A sunny heaven, smiling on their sleep;
 Or shall I tarry here? On me doth fall
 A sudden light! I stay, it is thy call!

II.

Is this the truth, and is it thou dost stand
 Between my work and me, to turn away
 My steps when I would seek the promised land,
 And hold me back from hope, and bid me stay
 To listen ever to the moaning sound
 Of restless waves that break upon the shore,
 And waken dreary echoes all around?
 Dost thou desire that I shall never more
 The golden morn remember, never find
 The peace of evening and the sunset glow?
 Is it thy will that all the past I bind
 Around a heavy heart, that beateth now
 With stormy throbs, because that past is near,
 But thou, the light of life, thou art not here?

III.

My spirit hovers round thy happy home,
 And clings to every dear familiar nook,
 And wanders where thy feet have loved to roam,
 And watches for thy step and for thy look.
 Dost thou not hear the passionate sob and cry?
 Dost thou not heed the anguish of my lot,
 Or see the strife when I am forced to fly
 From thee to those sad realms where thou art not
 To them a stern fate points, and then I gaze
 On thee, and through the dark of cruel death
 And silence of thy grave, I find the days,
 When all my life was thine, and every breath
 Of aspiration raised my soul to thee;
 But now I weep, and thou, oh dost thou see?

IV.

I passed a night of anguish and of fear
 Upon the lake that laves that silent land
 Where rest the spirits blest. Oh, will they hear
 My cry, or come to seek me on the strand?
 So deep and sweet their sleep, they heed no moan,
 No pale form see from out the billows rise,
 Watching the loved and lost. At last alone,
 Apart I see thee. Peace within those eyes,
 Where late the eager spirit seemed to chafe,
 Peace reigns instead of sad solicitude;
 And pitiful outstretched arms now draw me safe
 Unto thy faithful heart. The daylight rude
 Has shattered my fond dream; but ever more
 I watch and wait for thee upon the shore.

V.

I think when I look back from some high sphere
 On the dim narrow path my feet have trod,—
 Whilst I have struggled upward, to the clear
 Serene beatitude, the peace of God,—
 I shall not heed the summer charm, the song
 Of wood-birds piping through the long sweet day,
 The murmur of the limpid stream along
 The meadows, or the glad young flowers of May.
 Stronger than action, deeper than all thought,
 And full and true and sweeter than the tone
 Of any music that my heart hath caught
 Will be the memory of thy love. Alone
 The beauteous earth, oh love, is dear to me,
 Because it leads me on to death and thee.

VI.

Bethink thee, oh my heart, if it be well,
 That beauty, when it maketh thee rejoice,
 Recalls one vision only. Canst thou tell
 Why sweetest sounds seem echoes of one voice?
 And wilt thou linger with the past alone,
 The dead and past and gone? Thou dost not hear
 The cry of pain; thou dost not heed the moan
 Of them that work and die, that weep and fear!
 Ah, yes, my heart makes answer, but I see
 A hope for all; I know there is no wrong,
 No sorrow here for any, or for me,
 That is as great as love, or is as strong.
 Oh love I fear not. Where thou art, I'm brave;
 I dare to follow thee, even to the grave.

VII.

A lonely bird that's prisoned in its cage,
And hangs amidst a city's noise and strife,
With such hard fate doth ceaseless warfare wage,
Will not forego the tenderness of life,
The melody of love; but with spread wings :
It seems to see again the happy nest,
The mate that broods and listens; and it sings
With joy that looks as great as if the west
Was all aflame, and golden lights did play
Beneath the leaves, and flock the banks, and chase
The ripples of the stream, and every day
Brought new delight, and love, and lover's grace.
That song of love, or hope, or memory,
I too can sing when my heart aches for thee.

VIII.

I follow thee as doth the patient earth
The star she loves. I follow, oh, my love!
But never find thee! Well I know the worth
Of words and looks of thine, for high above
All hope I treasure memory. Ah, yes!
But still I move, and still my life must flow
Apart from thine. Long winter days confess
Thine absence, and the summer nights I know,
With all their beauty are but dark and sad.
The sanguine spring still says that thou art near,
And bids me rise to greet thee and be glad.
But day has sped; darkness again is here;
I do but follow thee alone, forlorn,
Although I find thee at the break of morn.

IX.

Yes, love, thou art the one star that I seek.
I follow thee afar, alone, and yet
I never lose thee. Hast thou seen how weak
The earth is and how poor, that thou hast met
The bare cold mountains with thy sunny rays,
And called forth even there a happy flower,
That lives through frosty nights and wintry days
To blossom in thy sight for one short hour?
I bless thee for the darkness and the light;
For full of thee are darkness, grief, and pain.
I bless thee for the day and for the night,
And for the heavy loss that is my gain.
I follow, for 'tis thou that leadest me,
Even through the dark I follow. Thou dost see.

X.

Am I so far from thee, or all too near?
 Lo! when I say my life is spent, and thou
 Art absent, whispers tell me thou art here.
 The gentle touch of unseen hands even now
 Doth draw me close; even now I hear thee chide
 With tender words the wrong of my despair;
 I see how thin the veil that seems to hide
 Thy form, to cloud and darken all the air,
 And blot the past. I see that all my life
 Is shared with thee for ever. Now I know
 That thou art with me, so at last the strife
 Is ended, and with it my bitter woe.
 But do thou teach me patience, love, I pray;
 I pray thee make me patient day by day.

XI.

Methinks that thou hast led me to a vast
 And populous region! All around I see
 Thick gathered forms, like those that in the past
 And in my dreams were wont to follow thee.
 They rise up like the waves o'er which a wind
 Eager and keen doth blow, to toss and break
 And vex them; when at dawn the sun-rays find
 A path, they pierce the clouds, and on the lake
 Fall jubilant; then myriad colours start,
 And wake, and leap forth out of death and night.
 Thus with a sudden flash comes to my heart
 The sure belief that where thou art is light.
 Where'er thy noble spirit wanders, there
 Is high resolve and worthy life and fair.

XII.

I stand alone upon a mountain height
 And watch a white mist slowly melt away
 Into the tender blue and golden light
 Of evening. Dark and stormy was the day;
 But now I see the restless torrents find
 Their peace in yon still lake; I see the snow
 Lie soft upon the hills. And now the wind
 That did in desolate places moan and blow,
 The dreadful precipice and forests dark,
 Are void of terror. For from land and sea
 They are thy messengers, sent forth to mark
 Thy path and guide me on my way to thee.
 I linger not, but through the dark I come,
 Through dark and daylight unto thee, my home.

FRANCES MARTIN.

ENGLISH INFLUENCE IN CHINA.

AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER TO "GREATER BRITAIN."

I WAS not free from prejudice when I visited the coast of China last autumn: prejudice in favour of the Chinese. I had long ago formed a strong opinion against much of the action of foreigners in China, and against their views, if those views are represented by the China press. That my prejudices were honest, I am sure; that they were well grounded I still believe. They had first been formed by such paragraphs as this, from the *China Mail*: "Let us say to China, 'This must be done, because we choose.'" And this from the *North China Herald*: "The gunboat will once more at least appear on the stage in China, for its mission is not yet ended, and premature attempts to dispense with it will only make its employment the more necessary and prolonged." My prejudices had been strengthened by the mendacious telegrams from China, which, during some years, weekly murdered missionaries, or insulted ambassadors, in the innocent columns of the English papers. In spite of the Yunnan difficulty, and Sir T. F. Wade's withdrawal from Peking, our general relations with China may be said to have improved. The late Lord Clarendon, to his honour, set the approval of the English Foreign Office on the "co-operative policy," first adopted at Peking by my friends Sir Frederick Bruce, General Vlangaly, and Mr. Anson Burlingame, of whom the Russian minister alone has lived to see the good results of the system then inaugurated. That wise policy consists in the strengthening of the Central Government at Peking. That Government is the government of a Tartar dynasty, unpopular with the Chinese people, it is true; but our plan is not to support it against insurrection, but only against its dele-

gated Provincial Governments, also Tartar, and also unpopular with the people. It is understood that we are not to prop up the Peking Government against any future widespread insurrection, and we are not to defend it in the possible event of a Mohammedan invasion under the Ameer of Kashgar. All that we are to do is to keep China together, no matter who is the Emperor who may sit on the throne at Peking. We are to deal with and through the Chinese Foreign Office, instead of with the local authorities in the various provinces. Force is to be used only to protect life and property immediately exposed, in opposition to the views of the fire-eating merchants at the ports, who think that China should be forced to do what they desire, and that force should be used at the caprice of any gunboat captain.

The success of the "co-operative policy" was jeopardised by the attack on the French missionaries at Tientsin, an attack which was due to the folly of those persons in employing professional kidnappers to collect children for them, but which was punished with most un-Oriental promptitude by the Peking Government. On this occasion, however, the *North China Herald* showed the old bad spirit, and positively advised that "the heads of districts should be publicly flogged. . . that the prefect and city magistrates of Tientsin should be degraded and executed, . . . that Tientsin should be debarred for twenty years from sending candidates to the provincial examinations, . . . and that a permanent occupation of the Ta-ku Forts should be insisted on." All these for an attack, by the 'longshore men of the roughest city in the Chinese Empire upon the most injudicious body of good

men who ever inhabited a foreign country! As I have spoken thus plainly with regard to the injudicious conduct of certain missionaries, I feel bound to add that nothing could have been better than the conduct of the English missionary bodies. Their policy is expressed in a letter of the London Missionary Society, written a few years ago. The English Foreign Office had informed the missionaries of the exact nature of their treaty rights. They then replied: "The range of movement here indicated agrees with that which the missionaries understood that they possessed, and in the judgment of the directors it provides an ample sphere of usefulness for all the missionaries whom it is practicable to send forth to China. It is under these powers that the seven principal stations of our mission have been established. It is under them that visits have been paid to the churches and converts around these stations, and that long preaching tours, extending at times to hundreds of miles, have been undertaken. The directors were urged to seek additional powers when the treaties shall be revised, but when it is beyond their strength to exhaust existing privileges, they think it useless to ask that they should be enlarged. . . . The directors feel assured that there is not one of the missionaries of this society who, in the course of his duties, would desire any appeal whatever to physical force." Dr. Mullens, in his "Report on the China Missions," took the same view, and showed that fifteen cities of the very first importance were, by treaty and in fact, open to the missionaries, and that only seven of the fifteen had as yet been occupied. Let me state that these treaty cities contain a population of three and a half millions. In Peking there are some 50 Protestant converts to 800,000 people, and in Hankow but the same number in a population of 1,000,000. Our Foreign Office summed up the whole question when it wrote, that "it is impossible to protect missionary establishments where no British Consul is stationed." When a few

American missionaries, and when the French Catholic missionaries, wander away into the interior, and occasionally meet with a little stone-throwing from a mob, we should remember the Murphy riots in England, the "anti-Chinese" riots of Australia, and hold our peace. Has China ever obtained compensation for the ill-usage of her peaceable and unoffending subjects in California, and in our colonies?

The Chinese have also been much attacked in the China press for what are called violations by them of the treaties in the matter of transit dues. It is certain that a clearer understanding with the Chinese upon the subject of local taxes on British goods would be desirable; but such an arrangement has never been refused by the Chinese, and was contained in the Supplementary Articles of Sir Rutherford Alcock, to which they agreed, though our merchants refused to accept as sufficient concessions made by China without any consideration given to China in return. When I saw Sir Thomas Wade in November last, I found that, in spite of all the pressure of the merchants, he still believes that this question will ultimately be settled on the basis that Sir Rutherford Alcock proposed. I gathered from him, however, that he thought that the Chinese have broken the letter of the Transit Clause of the Treaty of Tientsin. They contend that they have not; but it must at all events be remembered that this was a treaty extorted from them, and in which Lord Elgin, having the empire at his mercy, obtained privileges far in excess of those for which he was told to ask. It was foreseen at the time that difficulties would arise out of a grasping policy upon this point. We were warned that the Chinese, whose whole customs' system is one of tolls levied at many places, could not with justice be asked suddenly to revolutionise it in our favour. We should have wondered if foreigners had been freed from paying toll for their carriages upon English roads while it continued to be paid by British subjects.

We allow our whole trade with Central Asia to be stopped by the tolls that our Cashmere feudatories levy, and are shocked and horrified beyond measure if the Chinese presume to raise from our people their ordinary dues. Lord Elgin himself, in his despatch about his treaty, wrote: "As duties of *octroi* are levied universally in China, on native as well as foreign goods, and as canals and roads are kept up at the expense of Government, it seemed to be unreasonable to require that goods, by the simple process of passing into the hands of foreigners, should be entitled to the use of canals and roads toll-free, and should moreover be relieved altogether from charges to which they would be liable if the property of natives." Sir Rutherford Alcock, when British Minister at Peking, writing to the Inspector-General of Customs, said upon this question: "Lord Elgin made an admirable treaty upon paper. One thing only was wanting—that it should be practicable. Some of the stipulations, such as those on transit dues, ran counter to all established order, law, and custom, and were unworkable for that simple reason. The transit dues' stipulation gives to foreigners throughout the length and breadth of this vast empire, with its decentralised provinces and outlying dependencies, all larger than European kingdoms, the right of a favoured-nation clause as against all natives and native commerce. It purported to withdraw from all fiscal operations a portion of the inland commerce, which it was impossible to separate in any clear or definite way. It presupposed an organisation and a mode of national administration which had no existence, and the reconstruction under totally new forms, upon some European model, of the whole administration and government of China. Such ends are beyond the reach of treaties, and any attempt to secure them by such means must always lead to failure, for which it is absurd to hold the successors of the negotiators responsible, any more than the government or sovereign on whom impossible conditions have been

imposed by superior force." It must be remembered, too, that China has conceded many privileges to foreign merchants, not included in the treaty, such as the coast trade, and participation by foreign coasters in the "four months' privilege."

With regard to another vexed question, that of inland residence, there is now less dispute. It used to be contended by some missionaries, and by all those merchants in the Treaty Ports, who see their interest in the forcible "opening" of the Chinese Empire, that besides the right of travel with passports, our subjects possess a general right of residence in the interior. This was claimed under the general articles of the French Treaty, or by the terms of the Russian Treaty, through the most-favoured nation-clause in our own. In some letters to the *Times*, I pointed out that which was not in those days admitted, namely, that the Russian stipulations referred only to certain special places in Mongolia, and that the general words in the French Treaty are a forgery. It is now allowed by our Foreign Office that this is so, and also that the words "or other places" in the English Treaty are "not general words," but intended only to include the cities at the Treaty Ports. Our Foreign Office now declares that the specification of a right to reside at the Treaty Ports implies the exclusion of the privilege of permanent residence in other parts of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese, when fairly approached, and when asked with civility to grant a favour, instead of being threatened if they do not concede an imaginary right, permit a wide extension of the privileges which the treaties give. Shanghai merchants, on their shooting expeditions, travel like princes in the interior, with a numerous suite, their extra-territoriality, or exemption from the law, being at the same time preserved. In the valley of Cashmere, ruled by a prince feudatory to ourselves, whose father we first set upon the throne, no such liberality exists. There our sportsmen, and our

officers travelling for their health, are not only compelled to make use of passports, but are tied down by local rules as to the rate at which they shall move, and the number of servants in their retinue. The Chinese, in spite of the treaties, have always allowed of inland residence where it was practicable to do so; witness their quiet toleration of the presence of a missionary two hundred miles up the Pearl River, and of diggers and missionaries at Chefoo. On the passport matter the Chinese have observed the treaty, although Lord Elgin went beyond his instructions in insisting on it, and obtained the concession only by a threat of the renewal of the war. Sir Rutherford Alcock, in one of his despatches on the revision of the treaty, wrote: "As regards inland residence, the objections appear to be insuperable in connection with extra-territorial rights. The Chinese Government are willing that Chinese and foreigners should be placed on an equal footing; but not that the latter should also have exceptional privileges. They contend that if the foreign merchant claims the one, he must in common justice forego the other."

The Chinese suffer in English estimation by comparison with the Japanese. The progress of English influence in Japan has been so rapid and so startling, that many ask why China should not be "opened" with equal speed. Had it not been for the case of Japan, we should have thought the progress of European influence in China, in the last ten years, to have been remarkable. It is the extraordinary adaptability of the Japanese to foreign civilisation that makes the movement in China seem by comparison to be slow. The Japanese are a people, who, once before in their history, had accepted a foreign influence—the Chinese—which utterly changed their civilisation. What they had done once before, they have done again. European civilisation has not been forced upon Japan, but has been voluntarily adopted by the people. This is no argument for forcing it upon

China; on the contrary, there is reason to hope that if the Chinese are but left alone they will adopt it very fast for themselves. The use of gunboats and of expeditionary armies makes it impossible for the Chinese to accept that foreign influence, which can make its way only when it is an influence of peace. The Chinese Empire is of enormous size; the Japanese is small, and surrounded by the sea. There are but 33,000,000 of Japanese; there are ten times as many Chinese. On the other hand, the consequences to the world, and especially to the whole of the coast and islands of the Pacific, of the adoption of European civilisation by China will be vastly more important than those of its adoption by the Japanese. Not only are the Chinese a migrating people, rapidly making their way in the Straits Settlements, in the whole of the Malay Archipelago, in South America, and in the United States, but they are a people with more steadiness of character, and with more power of prolonged labour than the Japanese. They are less popular with those who live among them. The Japanese are courteous, polished, and full of pleasing tolerance. The Chinese are irritating to the English who have to deal with them, although those who have lived the longest in intimate association with the Chinese people, come to respect them for their perseverance. The future of English influence in China is not, however, to be determined by personal likes or dislikes for the Chinese nation. We have to consider both policy and justice.

What right have we to force China suddenly to accept the demands of our merchants as to railroads, mining, and internal navigation by means of steamships? As for railroads, the merchants forget that it is but a generation and a half ago that they were bitterly opposed in England. It is true that the Chinese authorities give reasons against both railroads and mining which are not their real ones. They pretend that it is the disturbance

of the graves of their ancestors that they dread. What they really fear is the introduction of great numbers of foreigners into the interior of their country. They will be willing that railroads should be made so soon as they can be made by the natives of the country for themselves. The opposition to internal steam navigation rests upon a different ground. The Chinese believe that a vast number of people, the boatmen and their families, would be ruined by the change. In its more settled districts, and especially along the river banks, China is peopled up to a point at which living becomes precarious to a degree never reached in any other country. The economical consequences of any disturbance of the present equilibrium of poverty have never been investigated. It has never been denied by any economist that the introduction of machinery may cause severe temporary injury to the labouring class; but the policy of such introduction is defended on the ground of the increase of general prosperity. But in China the question is one of starvation and revolution or anarchy, in many provinces at the least. While machinery has been gradually introduced into European countries, in the case of China we are suddenly threatening a vast overpopulated empire with all the splendid mechanical contrivances of Europe planted there at once. One of our Consuls has written with regard to the disturbance even of the coasting trade,—for which the Chinese themselves are responsible, but which is trifling as compared with that which would be caused by the admission of steamers to the inland or river trade:—"Thousands of Chinamen were thrown out of employment by the introduction of foreign vessels. One may reckon that for every hundred tons of foreign shipping employed on the China coast, thirty Chinese were deprived of their means of living. The introduction of railways into China would create far greater distress, and I conscientiously believe that the Chinese Government is not

yet capable of coping with the difficulties which too sudden an introduction of railroads would occasion."

The English newspapers have contained of late long letters relating to the opening of a Chinese railway. I am sorry to be forced to refer to this matter as an example of our unfair dealings with the Chinese. There used formerly to be a road from Shanghai to Woosung. Permission was asked of the prefect of Shanghai to re-make this road, which had fallen out of repair. A company was got up in London, and called "The Woosung Road Company." It is still so called. After a while rails were ordered, and "the road" was called a "tramway." The first that the Chinese authorities heard of the *Woosung railway* was when they were asked to let engines for it come into China duty-free. Messrs. Jardine and Matheson have made this railway; Sir Thomas Wade was at Shanghai when it was opened, and was staying with that firm. He was invited to the opening ceremony, and he did not go; but Mr. Medhurst, Consul at Shanghai, was present, and drank to the prosperity of the railroad. Are Messrs. Jardine and Matheson more powerful than the Chinese Empire, because this railroad of theirs has been made in defiance of treaty? From documents which have been published by the Shanghai papers, I gather the following facts. The prospectus of the company, which stated that the Chinese authorities were "favourable to the scheme," stated that which was untrue. In 1872 the British Consular authorities asked leave of the prefect of Shanghai, on behalf of the company, to take steps to re-open the old carriage road. In March 1873, the American Consul, who is, I believe, a shareholder in the company, made a similar application to the prefect. The prefect, in assenting to the road, objected to the levying of tolls upon it, as being contrary to Chinese custom, but made no other difficulty. In May 1873, the road began to be called a tramway by the papers. The prefect wrote to Mr. Medhurst to call his attem-

tion to this fact, and to repudiate the rumour that the Chinese Government had given its consent to such a scheme. Since he has learnt that a railway was to be made, he has repeatedly informed our Consul that its construction is most objectionable to his Government, and Mr. Medhurst has made no public answer to his protest. The prefect has lately written an important despatch, published in the Shanghai papers, in which he sums up the whole question. He says: "The right of controlling public works, and the making of railroads in every country, is vested in the Government of that country. No railroads can be made in England which affect property, or interfere with roads and water-ways, without the express sanction of the legislature. When foreigners buy property in a foreign country, such property must be subject to the laws of the country in which it is situate, except in cases affected by express treaty stipulations. There are no treaty stipulations between England and China authorising the purchase of land for the making of railroads. In the formation of the Woosung railroad a number of public roads, pathways, and water-courses have been destroyed, to the great inconvenience of the population. Bridges have been built over creeks, and the passage of boats laden with cargo prevented." This despatch has not, it appears, been answered. It seems unanswerable, and I know not how Mr. Medhurst will be able to clear himself from the charge of a singular want of caution in attending the opening ceremony of the Woosung railroad, nor how Sir Thomas Wade will be able to explain the fact that he seems to have made no reply to the repeated communications of the Chinese authorities.

The result of our high-handed proceedings towards the Chinese Government can only be to drive China into a Russian alliance, which will not only have unpleasant consequences to our ally, the Ameer of Kashgar, but which in the long run will cause the granting of privileges to Russia in overland

trade which may ruin our commerce upon the Chinese coast.

The Yunan difficulty would require a long paper to itself. Suffice it to say that many who well know the facts believe, as I believe, that we have a bad case. It will always remain chronicled to our shame in our own Parliamentary papers, that we mixed up demands for trade privileges with demands for satisfaction to our national honour, and that we allowed, and were indeed the cause of, the infliction of horrible tortures on the people of the place where Mr. Margary's death occurred. Judging from my conversation of last November with Sir Thomas Wade, and from all that has been published since, I cannot but fear that he has taken upon insufficient grounds the very serious step of removing the archives of the British Legation from Peking. Our Foreign Office seems wisely to have forbidden him to do that which he proposed, namely, to continue to ask for money compensation, and for trade privileges, in connection with this Yunan affair. He seems to have been perplexed to know what he should ask for next, and in this perplexity to have cut the knot, which he himself had tied, by threatening force. I doubt whether "people at home" will approve the language of the *North China Herald* of the 1st of July, which, in announcing that Sir Thomas Wade has quarrelled with the Chinese Foreign Office, and has come to Shanghai, declares that "war will be welcome."

Even at this moment, when by our own acts we check the tendency of the Chinese towards progress, they are planning schemes which will do more towards the opening-up of China than could be done by war. In 1875 the Peking Government employed a gentleman from Newcastle to survey the coal measures of the Island of Formosa. Mines have since been opened there, and are being worked by the Chinese themselves with great success, and the same gentleman is about surveying the coal measures in the neighbourhood of Peking. If peace should last there can be but

little doubt that the coal mines of China will be worked within the next few years.

It must always be remembered, when we are describing our trade relations with the Chinese, that we cannot act alone. Other powers must be considered. America, which has about 16 per cent of the trade of the China coast, is reasonable, and will work with us, but Germany with 3 per cent, France with 1 per cent, and Russia with little or none, are unwilling to agree to changes which suit us. For instance, the French will not consent to a very moderate increase of the silk duty, although England is ready to agree to a heavy increase of the opium duty, which would tell against herself. These changes would form the consideration to the Chinese in return for a favourable adjustment of internal transit dues, and other matters. On the other hand, the merchants want us to negotiate with China at the point of the bayonet, and to say: "These things we will have, and will give you nothing in return." This, of course, is unacceptable to those who live "at home," and the result is a dead-lock. Of course the Chinese do not love us; it would be wonderful if they did. They have allowed Englishmen to organise their only perfect service, the Customs, but when Mr. Hart retires it is probable that a Chinese Mandarin will take his place. They are training a hundred students in America, and in a few years will be able to work their Customs service without foreign aid. On the whole, however, the *status quo* is preferable to war, and I left the China coast as I had reached it, with the conviction that the co-operative policy is the only policy which can maintain our China trade. Under the old system a Consul at a small port could provoke, in a single day, a difficulty which might destroy for years a trade of millions. It is impossible to leave it in the power of individuals to destroy the fabric of commercial prosperity, which has been built up upon the basis of our China treaties.

It must not be supposed that I am a

thick and thin apologist of the Chinese. There are some points in which I would gladly see our influence over them used in a hostile sense. The atrocious tortures by which they wring confession from their criminals constitute a horror which western nations might properly put down by force; but force is a very different thing when used in the interests of pure humanity to what it is when made use of in the interests of trade.

The detestable climate of Southern China is a drawback to the strength of English influence. Any one who sees the clean and beautiful island-city of Hong Kong in its lovely winter season, will think that its residents have nothing to complain of; but the breathless summer of many months of a still and damp heat, ten times worse than that of Australia, is as exhausting as is the summer climate of Calcutta itself. Hong Kong, however, is a colony of which we have every reason to be proud. While the Portuguese settlement at Macao, which lies close at hand, enjoyed a short-lived prosperity, founded on the infamous Coolie traffic, the prosperity of Hong Kong is founded upon free-trade. In the matter of the Chinese Coolie traffic we have cause for congratulation. In this, at all events, we have helped the Chinese Government with representations, and with action, which they never could have made or taken for themselves. It was time indeed that England should speak out, although it is to her honour that she should have spoken. The Chinese Coolie traffic was worse than the African slave-trade, to put down which we made such sacrifice. The truth is that the Chinese Coolies, taking to Cuba no women with them, are less respected and more cruelly tortured and worked-out by their masters than were even the negro slaves of the Spanish colonies, because they are not looked upon as breeding animals! Happily Macao is ruined, while Hong Kong thrives. If we were to believe some of the Hong Kong merchants we should have to echo their complaint that Hong Kong is ruined

too. I received the greatest kindness and hospitality from many of these gentlemen, but I feel bound to speak out with regard to their political ideas. I would far sooner go with them for the annexation of the Chinese Empire than say one word in approval of their custom of perpetually attacking the Chinese Government on questions in which it is strictly in the right. The Hong Kong merchants assured me with grave faces that the colony has been "ruined by a Chinese blockade." Trade is dull throughout the East, but the Hong Kong merchants protest that there is no cause for its dullness at Hong Kong, except this Chinese blockade. Chinese gunboats cruise around the island of Hong Kong and board the junks. Now it is notorious that there used to be more smuggling from Hong Kong into China than even into Spain from the similarly-situated Gibraltar. There is still much smuggling of opium, and by our treaty we seem to have taken away the natural right of the Chinese to fine the smugglers, and as they can only seize the goods, they are bound to be doubly strict. What then is the complaint? The merchants say that the gunboats "levy squeezes on the junks." All these gunboats have European custom officials on board, masters of the Chinese language, whose livelihood depends on no such case being proved against the gunboat on board which they are, for in that case Mr. Hart would be forced to dismiss them from his service. Is it likely that these persons levy illegal exactions from the junks? Who prove these cases of exaction? Chinese Coolies, on their bare word; when, on his most solemn oath, these same merchants will not believe any great Chinese official. Sir Brooke Robertson, our Consul at Canton, refused a little time ago to back a more than usually violent and absurd remonstrance of our merchants; he was in consequence called a "Mandarin," and told that he "prevaricated." The day after a number of Hong Kong merchants had told me that their trade was ruined by the

Chinese blockade, I examined for myself the statistics, and I also inquired of the highest authority in the colony what truth there was in the statement. I found that in spite of the general dullness of our Eastern trade the trade of Hong Kong had not at that time decreased. The fact, however, that our Eastern trade is stagnant is a small one by the side of another, for a fact I fear it is. Our export trade to China will disappear, and its disappearance is but a matter of time. The day will come when the Chinese, with cheap labour, will make for themselves all, with the exception perhaps of woollen goods, that we can make for them with dear. They have cotton, coal, water-power, and clever fingers; and we shall be lucky if they only supply themselves, and do not also rob us of foreign trade.

My mention just now of the Chinese gunboats reminds me of one point in which we have distinctly carried out what Lord Beaconsfield last year declared to be our policy—the preservation of China. When the first Chinese gunboats were built at Canton the Viceroy hoisted upon them his own flag. Our Admiral at Hong Kong refused to salute or to advise the captains of merchantmen to honour any flag, except the "Dragon Flag" of the Chinese Empire. The various viceroys have been driven by this policy to hoist the yellow flag with the black dragon on the local warships, and the moral effect in strengthening the hold of Peking on the provinces, of this and similar acts has been considerable.

The value of Hong Kong as a door for the admission of English influence into China has been diminished by one act of Mr. Gladstone's Administration. All Englishmen in the East regret what they believe to have been the folly of abolishing our mint at Hong Kong, which was giving an English coinage to all China. China has no real coinage for purposes of trade. Little bits of silver assayed and weighed, and dollars of the Mexican Republic, battered out of shape, and classed one, two, and

three, at different values, according as an affected *comprador* pretends to have found more or less bronze in their composition—this is the ridiculous "coinage" of the coast. In Hong Kong itself, when I took my letters to the post and gave a dollar to the clerk to pay for stamps, I had to wait while he bit it, tried it with an acid, weighed it, and gave me change, not as though my dollar were a dollar, but according to its weight, which was $\frac{96}{100}$ ths of what it should have been. This was no exceptional case, but was the practice gone through in every instance. Such is the repute of English coin, that the Hong Kong mint would in a few years have introduced the use of its dollars by the Chinese people throughout the trading portions of the Empire, without continuing to impose any charge whatever on the English tax-payer.

The history of dollars would be a very curious one. The Chinese look doubtfully upon all that do not bear the name of some well-known Chinese firm stamped upon them, as we write names across the back of a bank-note, except they are of one kind: Mexican pillar dollars, the two pillars of which are described in their Chinese name, "Two-piecey-canneltick" dollars, that is, two candlestick dollars. A note in the history of dollars that I propose would have to record the fact that our expeditionary force to Abyssinia had to be supplied with Maria Theresa dollars, of which none were to be obtained in the market, these being the only coins received by the natives of that country. The Austrian Government had to be applied to by the British Government, and the coins had to be specially struck for us at the Vienna mint.

The Compradors, of whom I have just now spoken, are important people in Hong Kong. I visited their club, where I was most hospitably received, and found it second only in splendour to that of the opium-farmers. The latter are so rich that the entrance fee to their club is fixed at 100*l.*, and their club is fitted up with a combination of Chinese

comforts and English comforts which is far from being disagreeable.

The temptation to describe the city of Canton, and the extraordinary sights to be seen in its thronged streets must be resisted by me, because they have been described over and over again. Even the memories of the splendid hospitalities of the Dutch Governor-General of "India," at the palace of Buitenzorg, have not obscured those of my stay at the Tartar General's Yamun in the military quarter of Canton. I know no city, so easily accessible, which is so unlike every other in the world. Very little foreign influence is observable in its streets, except, indeed, in the shops, where "valuable old blue" is being manufactured and sold for the English market, and in the adoption of magenta and other hideous dyes in the new silks. The Chinese seem to have taught us their colours, and learnt ours, we gaining by the exchange. English influence in Canton is seen in one way, as to which there may be some difference of opinion. Our excellent and able Consul, Sir Brooke Robertson, has for many years been in the habit of drilling a battery of Tartar artillery and a brigade of Tartar infantry, belonging to the Chinese Government, to serve as his guard; but it is doubtful whether the Imperial Government has not taken advantage of his kindness, and of the services of his clever sergeant-major, to pass through Canton a large number of troops who have received European training in this way. The Tartar troops at Canton are armed with Sniders, they are splendid men, and as solid as our guards. It is to be hoped that English troops may not have to face them in any future war. Should such a war at any time unfortunately take place, I believe that it would be necessary that we should take China under our care, so far as her army and customs are concerned. Instead of taking Peking, and levying a war contribution upon China, it would be wiser to hold the ports, to collect the Customs by English officers, and to continue to support the throne of China, by what-

ever dynasty it might be occupied, as the only symbol of order by which it would be possible to prevent anarchy and protect trade. I have used the words "whatever dynasty might occupy the throne," because the secret societies which are spreading throughout the Chinese Empire are believed to intend to set a native dynasty upon the Tartar throne. The wearing of pigtailed by the Chinese is, as is well known, an emblem of their subjection to the Tartar dynasty, and the cutting off of pigtailed, which is spreading through the Empire like a mysterious epidemic, is supposed by many to be the work of the White Lily Society, and to indicate the coming of a revolution. The policy of China would, however, I believe, be much the same were a native sovereign to be crowned at Peking in place of a Tartar emperor.

The relations of Canton and Hong Kong are always somewhat strained. One of the greatest difficulties of Hong Kong is that it is an asylum for all the blackguards of Canton, who are far from few in number. Whenever a man commits a crime in Canton he flies naturally to Hong Kong, to be under the British flag. The Chinese officials follow their criminals sometimes, and claim their extradition, which we are often unable to accord, for fear lest they should be political offenders. Mandarins have been known to suborn false witness on the "Hill of Peace," as the worst portion of the Chinese town at Hong Kong is named, and to pretend that refugees, who were in fact concerned in a rebellion, were thieves and forgers. The turbulent nature of the population of both towns is seen by the fact that the river steamers, running from the one to the other city, are forced to keep their second-class passengers below, with an iron grating over each hatchway, and with sailors at each grating, revolver in hand, to prevent the possibility of the passengers plundering the ship, as once occurred. Hong Kong is an admirably policed city, and is a thoroughly well-kept and well-governed place. Its garrison is strong

enough to take and hold Canton, the largest city in the Chinese Empire, in spite of the Tartar troops; but the Chinese can ruin Hong Kong whenever they please by the peaceful process of building a railway. A railway from the north, with a terminus opposite to the excellent anchorage of the Bogue, would cause the rise of a Chinese port which would destroy Hong Kong. When our merchants talk of "opening" China, we should remember that while the great English houses in China would gain in a thousand ways by such a change, English trade, as a whole, would suffer. The making of railroads throughout China will, in all probability, be accompanied by the starting of local manufactures upon an enormous scale. If ever our Eastern trade is ruined there is a future for many of the men, and for much of the capital employed in it, in the direction and support of manufacturing establishments in the Treaty Ports and in the coal-bearing provinces of China; but it must never be forgotten for one moment that the gain of these men would be the loss of Lancashire.

Hong Kong cannot be considered by itself; Singapore in many ways stands on the same footing. Both these cities, though called "colonies," are in fact nothing but free ports, depending on the trade of countries not under the British flag. The future of these depot towns is a gloomy one, I fear. Trade is yearly becoming more direct. In old days, if Australia wanted coffee, and to pay for it in flour, she sent her flour to England, and the tropical colonies sent coffee to England, by ships which called at depot ports; both the trades were carried on in English ships, and the profits of both were for England. Now, to take one example out of many, Java, as I found when I was there, sends sugar and coffee direct to Australia, and receives directly in exchange flour, butter, horses, leather, preserved meat, and wool. Still, while the outlook is bad for all depot ports, it is less gloomy for Singapore, Malacca, and Penang than it is for Hong Kong. The rich

Malay Peninsula, in which these British settlements are lost, ought to be British soil, so hopeless is it to preserve between the Chinese and native populations of the independent states that peace without which life and property cannot be protected, mines worked, or trade developed. I will not go into the Perak question, and will only say that I believe that the Singapore merchants are right in demanding the annexation of the Peninsula. As in 1874 and 1875 I strongly opposed the annexation of Fiji, it may be thought that I am guilty of inconsistency in advocating that of hitherto independent Malay States. There is annexation and annexation. In Fiji we were going for the first time to a country in which our Government, as such, had never interfered. The case of the Malay Peninsula rather resembles that of the Fanti Confederation upon the Gold Coast. There has been British protection of a country in which slavery exists, and in which Chinese and British subjects are constantly at war with the Malays. Rapine, piracy, cruel debt-slavery of innocent children, and gross misrule exist throughout the Malay Peninsula. We have not now for the first time to consider whether we will interfere with this state of things. We did interfere by appointing residents a long time back, and are made responsible for evils which we cannot check. Whether we annex the Malay Peninsula, of which there now seems no chance, or whether we do not, the future of Singapore seems less doubtful than the future of Hong Kong. The advance of Sumatra in material prosperity under the Dutch rule must bring some additional trade to Singapore. Already the tobacco of Dhelhi, in Sumatra, is making for itself a name which will soon stand second only to Cuba; but this again is a trade which will not much benefit our Straits Settlements, nor any depot ports, for the tobacco will be sent straight home. I had a very interesting conversation at Penang with a Chinese merchant, whose

family has been established there for a long time. He was hot for the colonization of the Malay Peninsula, and told me that which I believe is true, that his countrymen, swarming in under our rule, would make of that country one of the richest on the face of earth.

My visit to the Straits was but a flying one, for a journey to Java was interpolated in its midst, a dream of Mangosteins and thunderstorms, of Dutch palaces with acres of orchids, ponds full of Victoria Regias, and butterflies as big as birds. It is as strange that more English travellers do not visit Java for its beauty, as that more do not visit Canton for its political and social interest. Newer scenes cannot be found. From the moment of embarkation upon dirty steamers, crowded with Dutch ladies in bare feet and native dress, to cross a sea that is covered with floating palm-trees from the Sumatra rivers, to that of disembarkation in that lovely tropical forest, dotted with houses here and there, which is called the city of Batavia, all is fresh even to the experienced traveller's eye. The system of the Dutch, the afternoon stillness of Buitenzorg Palace, a sort of tropical Versailles, the great rumbling coaches drawn by six pied-rats of ponies upon the levels, and dragged by eight great tawny buffaloes up the hills, the deafening screeching of the beetles, the tree-ferns of Sandanglaya, the "walking-flowers," or pink-orchid-insects, feeding on live butterflies, which they will not take dead; all these tempt the traveller to linger over descriptions of things which cannot be described. The Dutch statistics are eloquent as to the nature of the country which they occupy. Java is not large, but within its limits 300 people every year are eaten by carnivora, 200 by the crocodiles, 100 killed by the rhinoceros, 500 killed by lightning, while 100 die from snake-bites, and a varying number by earthquakes and volcanic action. The traveller journeying under Dutch protection along the well-known roads is safe against most of the accidents which

destroy the natives of the land ; but the hospitalities by which he is surrounded, combined with want of knowledge of the language, prevent him from making observations upon the nature of the Dutch rule which are of any worth. It is certain that the Dutch have killed art in Java. They do but little for education, and the doubtful question is whether under their administration the material position of the people has been improved.

Whatever may be the faults of British rule, and however much it may be true, as is asserted by the Dutch, that we more frequently provoke rebellions by injudicious conduct than do they, it is certain that our annexation of the Malay Peninsula would not produce that abject degradation of the people before their rulers which is too evident in tropical countries occupied by the Dutch.

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